

## NPPD Urging Farmers To Be Careful Around Power Lines

Columbus, Neb. – Agriculture is a key component of Nebraska's economy. With planting season on the horizon, Nebraska Public Power District is encouraging farmers – many involved in spring planting at this time – to be particularly alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines.

“We want all farm workers to look up, look down, look all around before starting work to see where potential contact between farming equipment and electric transmission and distribution lines could occur,” said NPPD Transmission and Distribution Manager Joel Dagerman.

NPPD urges farm workers to review their activities and work practices that take place around any power lines. Everyone who works on the farm should know the location of power lines and keep farm equipment at least 20 feet away from them. The minimum 20 foot distance is a 360-degree rule – below, to the side and above lines.

“It may take a little more time, but ensuring proper clearance can save lives and reduce the possibility of creating a power outage that impacts more than just the farm. Some can create an outage in a local community,” said Dagerman. “Contact with power lines can have an adverse effect on an individual through the potential of electrocution, but also affected are homes, businesses and industry through the outage.”

Dagerman urged farmers not to raise or move a power line under any situation and to be aware of underground lines before digging and contact the Digger's Hotline (dial 811) before work begins.

Many farm electrical accidents that involve power line contact happen when loading or preparing to transport equipment to fields, or while performing maintenance or repairs on farm machinery near power lines. It can be difficult to estimate distance and sometimes a power line is closer than it looks. A spotter or someone with a broader view can help.

Safety tips to avoid contact with power lines include:

- \* Talk to those working in the area of power lines to make sure everyone is on the same safety page.
- \* Use a second person as a spotter when working around power lines.
- \* Do not raise the arms of planters, cultivators or truck bed when moving vehicles;
- \* Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting larger modern farm machinery.
- \* Watch for radio antennas that extend from the cab to fifteen feet above the ground that could make contact with power lines;
- \* Be careful not to raise any equipment such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines.  
--Non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness and dust and dirt contamination.
- \* Do not try to clear storm-damage debris and limbs near or touching power lines or near fallen lines.

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