

COLUMBUS[®] CURRENTS

Go Above and Beyond for a Safe Harvest

By Anne Prince

Modern farming often relies on data and equipment with GPS and auto-guidance systems. However, even with these modern conveniences, farm workers must remain vigilant. That's because farming is considered one of the most dangerous jobs.

Massive machinery is indispensable to farming, but the same impressive size, height and extensions make them particularly vulnerable to contacting power lines. That's why staying alert, focused and knowledgeable about potential hazards and safety procedures is crucial.

During a busy harvest season, the familiar sights around the farm can easily fade into the background, and farm workers can overlook the power lines overhead. However, failing to notice them can lead to deadly accidents.

360 Awareness

Awareness of your surroundings, around, above and below, and planning safe equipment routes can significantly reduce the risk of accidents. Even with GPS and auto-steering, it's imperative that farm workers keep a close eye on the equipment's location and are ready to take action if necessary.

Exposed underground powerlines, defective wiring in farm buildings and extension cords are also hazards. Grain bins can pose a potential danger as well. The National Electrical Safety Code requires power lines to be *at least* 18 feet above the highest point on any grain bin with which portable augers or other portable filling equipment are used. If you plan to install new grain bins or you're concerned about the proximity of power lines to existing grain bins, contact Columbus Electric Cooperative.

Smart Harvest Safety Tips

To ensure a safer harvest season, SafeElectricity.org recommends the following tips to avoid electrical accidents on the farm:

Exercise caution near power lines.

Be careful when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.

Use spotters when operating large machinery near power lines.

Ensure the spotters do not touch the machinery while it is moving near power lines.

Lower equipment extensions, portable augers or elevators before moving or transporting equipment.

Do not raise equipment, such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Remember that non-metallic materials like lumber, tree limbs, ropes and hay can conduct electricity, especially when damp, dusty or dirty.

Never attempt to raise or move power lines to clear a path.

Doing so could result in electric shock or death.

Avoid using metal poles inside bins.

Don't use metal poles to break up bridged grain inside or around bins.

Hire qualified electricians.

Ensure that qualified electricians handle work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.

While rare, the only reason to exit equipment that has come into contact with overhead lines is if the equipment is on fire. However, if it happens, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the machinery and the ground at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

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CEC sends Lineworkers to Light Up Navajo Project

This past July CEC Lineworkers Frankie Gonzales, Porter Howard, Colton Villegas and Daniel Lopez traveled to the Navajo Nation to help extend electric service to those that have never had power.

Working with the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority they installed 24 utility poles, 3 transformers and 6,512 feet of electrical line to connect homes to the electric grid.

Lineworkers from around the nation participate every year.

Check out this month's Enchantment magazine to read more about how they made a difference!



Board Highlights

The Board reviewed and approved the operational and financial reports for the month of July. They discussed wildfire mitigation planning as well as approved a substation



Analysis for a mini-SCADA system.

PAY-BY-PHONE CHANGE

The phone number for the Columbus Electric Pay-By-Phone system will be changing effective October 15, 2024. The current number, 1-855-874-5352, will continue to be in effect until that date. The new number, 1-855-959-2597, will be printed on bills beginning with the October billing so no need to memorize it. Should you have questions or experience any issues please contact us.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Now is the time to schedule annual maintenance for your home's heating system. During fall months, HVAC technicians are typically less busy, making this an excellent time for maintenance and any necessary repairs before the winter months.

A qualified technician can clean filters, check for leaks and ensure all system components are working efficiently to keep your home cozy and warm when the temperatures begin to drop.

Emergency Response Number
1-800-228-0579

Toll - free Office Number
1-800-950-COOP (2667)

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