

## Think ahead

- > Mark overhead power lines and their voltages on your farm maps. Your local Electricity Company will supply this information.
- > Your local Electricity Company will also provide free information and advice about the precautions and safe working practices to be followed near overhead power lines.
- > Overhead lines should be at a minimum clearance from the ground of 5.2 metres (17 feet). However, live equipment fitted on poles may be as low as 4.3 metres (14 feet). Ensure those using your equipment, and that of any contractors, take this into account and know the full maximum height and vertical reach.
- > Get a copy of the HSE leaflets GS6 and AIS8 and use them to plan your work: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ais8.pdf> and <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/g6.pdf>.

## Simple actions can save lives

- > Make sure anyone working on your land knows the safety advice and information set out above, including the location of overhead lines on your land, and train them on the actions they need to take.
- > Take the emergency telephone number of your local Electricity Company from this leaflet, put it in your phone and get your staff and contractors to do the same.
- > Show them the HSE **Shock Horror** leaflet.

## What to do if your vehicle or machinery comes into contact with an overhead power line:

- > If any part of your vehicle is in contact with an overhead power line or within 5 metres of a fallen line then stay on it until the Emergency Services or Electricity Company arrive, unless you are in danger.
- > Phone the Electricity Company using the number on this leaflet.
- > If you must get off then you should jump clear making leaping strides so that one foot is off the ground at all times until you are at least 5 metres away.
- > Do not return to the vehicle.
- > Keep others away from the vehicle. Touching it or even getting too close could kill them.
- > Never touch overhead power lines, always assume that lines are live unless the Electricity Company has told you they are dead.

This information should be used in conjunction with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) leaflet, **Shock Horror** – <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg389.pdf>.

## Emergency contact numbers

Network Operator Emergency contact number  
Northern Ireland Electricity Ltd 0800 616 817

Network Operator Advice contact number  
Northern Ireland Electricity Ltd 08457 643 643



Energy Networks Association  
6th Floor, Dean Bradley House  
52 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AF

Tel +44 (0)20 7706 5100  
Fax +44 (0)20 7706 5101  
[www.energynetworks.org](http://www.energynetworks.org)

© ENA 2012

Energy Networks Association Limited is a company registered in England & Wales No. 04832301. Registered office: 6th Floor, Dean Bradley House, 52 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AF



# Energy Networks Association Safety Information for Farmers & Agricultural Contractors

## Vital energy, delivered safely

There are overhead power lines criss-crossing the country. Often unnoticed, they are essential to provide electricity to cities, towns, villages and rural communities. They carry voltages ranging from 230 volts (domestic voltage) up to 400,000 volts. Even domestic voltage can be fatal and high voltage electricity can jump large gaps.

The energy network is designed to keep you safe, but people die each year due to accidental contact with overhead power lines, whilst others endure life changing injury with the lives of their families also suffering as a result.

---

**The risk of danger can be considerably reduced by following some simple safety tips.**



## Staying safe

- > Any power lines, electricity substations or electrical engineering equipment may be live and could kill you. Do not touch them, or any object or person that is in contact with them – even if you believe the power is off, it could be turned on again without warning.
- > Electricity can jump gaps so even getting too close to lines can be dangerous. Many objects can also conduct electricity such as trees, string, rope and water.
- > Rubber boots will not protect you and not all power lines are insulated.
- > Do not assume lines on wood poles are telephone lines – most overhead power lines are supported by poles.
- > If an overhead power line has fallen to the ground it may still be live, keep more than 5 metres away – the current can travel along the ground, through objects such as fences or metal objects and through water or other liquids. You do not need to touch the power line to be killed by it.
- > If you need to get clear, jump clear making leaping strides so that one foot is off the ground at all times until you are 5 metres away.

### Top tips

1. Do not touch or get close to power lines.
2. Keep 5 metres away from fallen or damaged power lines, AND
3. Contact the emergency services and the Electricity Company immediately.

## Staying safe in the agricultural industry

Overhead power lines are common in rural areas. They are found on both wooden poles and steel pylons. All these lines can kill you and extra care should be taken by those working in the agriculture industry.

As farmers and agriculture workers you are especially at risk given the nature of your tasks. You should take extra care when:

- > Using machinery such as tractors, cranes and tipper trucks to lift or load anything.
- > Operating combine harvesters or other large machinery, especially those with attachments.
- > Installing or using objects with long parts such as irrigation pipes, ladders or boom sprayers.

You can considerably reduce the risk to you, your co-workers and contractors by ensuring everyone is informed of the general safety advice above, carrying a mobile phone at all times and having the number for the Electricity Company on it. This information can be found on the back of this leaflet. In addition to the advice above:

- > Take note of the location of power lines on or near your land and ensure this is known to anyone working on it.
- > Do not carry out lifting or loading within 5 metres of power lines.
- > Never stack or store anything underneath power lines.
- > Carry long objects horizontally as electricity can jump across gaps.
- > If possible avoid work near power lines and avoid access routes under power lines.
- > Select machinery and vehicles that are not too large.
- > Do not raise the level of ground underneath power lines.