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EC92-718 Caution Look Up! Power Lines May Be Overhead

Rollin D. Schnieder
University of Nebraska - Lincoln

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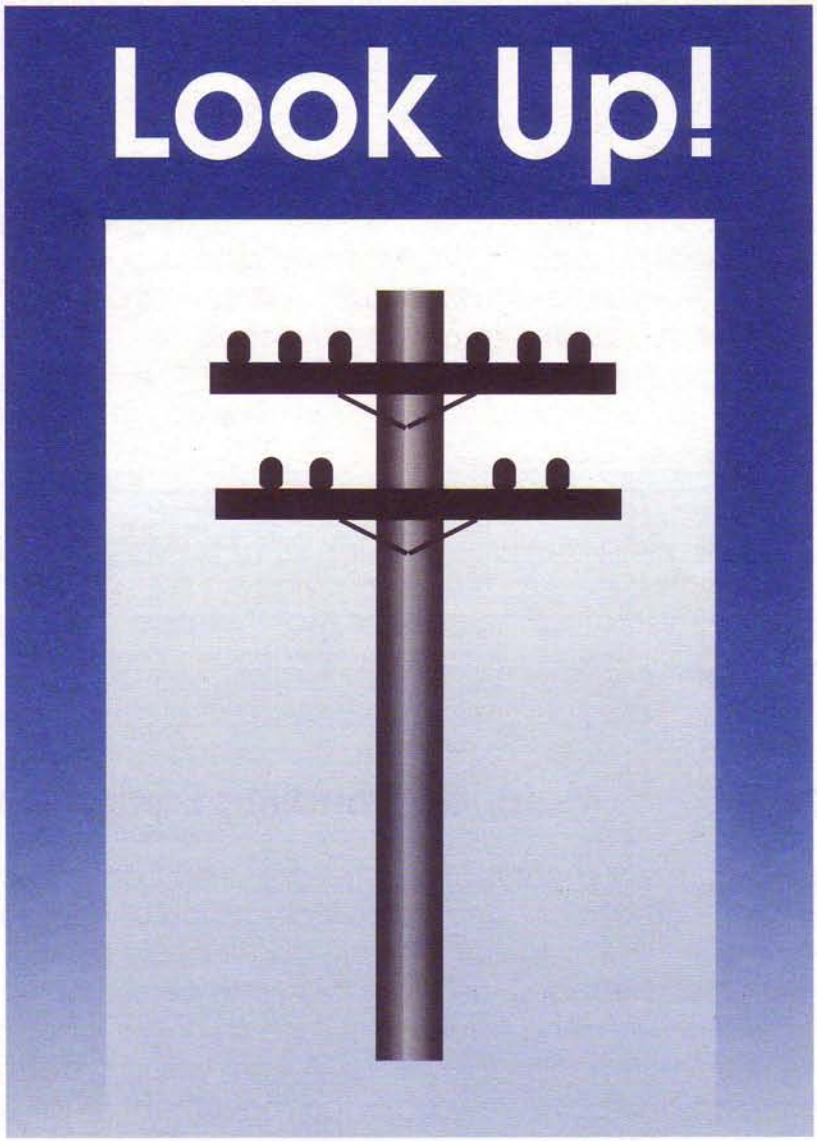
CAUTION



POWER LINES MAY BE OVERHEAD

By Rollin D. Schnieder
Extension Specialist, Safety

Accidents are caused by carelessness

Be Careful...
Avoid Accidents...
Don't become a Statistic...

Kite Flying

Flying a kite near electric wires is dangerous. When flying a kite, always make sure the kite string is dry. If you use wet string, a wire, or a string with wire in it, you are asking for trouble. Don't try to free a kite from high voltage wires if it gets tangled up in them. Remember, Ben Franklin has already discovered electricity by the use of a kite. Don't attempt to discover it in the same way.

Irrigation Pipe

Irrigation pipe need not touch an overhead power line to kill the handler. A worker may lift a light irrigation pipe to be moved to a new location or to be placed on an irrigation trailer. If the pipe is lifted too high and comes close to or in contact with an overhead power supply line, death usually results.

Stacking Hay

Never stack hay under a power line. Many people have been electrocuted simply because they didn't LOOK UP. Modern haying equipment operates high above the ground. The careless operator who guesses that the machine will go under high voltage wires is asking for trouble. Always allow for uneven ground and bouncing of the machine.

Augers and Other Materials Handling Equipment

Materials handling equipment that is carelessly used can cause serious injury or death. Augers used to fill grain bins can accidentally touch or come near overhead power wires. Anyone coming in contact with the auger could be electrocuted. Several persons may be electrocuted, since more than one person helps place the auger in position. Other materials handling equipment such as auger wagons, trucks with augers, and mixing units are equally dangerous. A farm wiring system should be planned to allow at least one passageway for the movement of tall equipment. Never place buildings near or under power lines.

Cranes and Booms

Cranes and booms coming in contact with power liens have caused many deaths in Nebraska. Crane operators should be warned to stay away from overhead power lines. In many cases, the operator may not be injured severely; however, workers standing on the ground who come near or touch the machine are usually the ones who are injured or killed. Safety devices are available for booms or cranes. They will insulate the machine from the high voltage wires in case electrical contact is made.

Cranes, drilling rigs, derricks, and materials handling equipment may come in contact with overhead power lines. If possible, the operator of the machine should

break contact with the line. If this is impossible, the operator will usually be safe by staying in the cab. If the operator jumps clear, there should be no contact with any part of the machine once the operator reaches the ground.

Well drilling rigs operated close to power lines cause many deaths in Nebraska. Never let the equipment come near these wires. Remember, it's the worker on the ground who usually is hurt. Be sure that the machine is out of reach of power lines when you are repairing and cleaning it.

TV Antennas

TV antennas should never be installed near a power line. Make sure they are far enough away so that the antennas cannot come in contact with power lines. Guessing is not good enough. In many cases inexperienced persons try to repair a TV antenna. If the antenna is top-heavy, or if the wind is strong, it may break away and allow the mast or guy wires to touch a nearby power line. Anyone working on the antenna or holding a guy wire will be seriously injured or killed. There is also a possibility of setting the house on fire.

Augers, TV antennas, and irrigation pipes should be handled and stored to keep them away from power lines. Wind, conditions of the ground, and direction of movement should be considered when moving tall equipment.

Tree Pruning

Pruning trees can be a dangerous job if electric power lines are close. A limb falling against a power line can cause death to anyone in contact with the limb. The falling limb also could cause the power line to break. Notify power companies before pruning if these hazards exist.

Fallen Wires

Stay away from fallen overhead wires. Anyone who touches them may be killed.

Never touch a person who is in contact with an electric power source. Push or pull the person away with a dry stick. Do not use a stick that contains sap, since it may conduct electricity. A dry rope also may be used. Make sure the rescuer is standing on dry ground. Attempt this rescue only if you are willing to accept grave risk of your life.

Don't figure on luck for the safety of you and your co-workers. You must realize that dangers exist around high voltage electrical equipment. Usually it is impossible to remove these dangers. You can, however, accept the fact that hazards do exist. Use good judgment and learn to live with these hazards.

Tree Spraying

Tree spraying has become essential for most cities, villages and/or right-of-ways. Operators should keep the spray mist and passenger platform away from overhead power poles. Don't electrocute yourself while spraying.

What Should Be Done in Case of an Accident?

If you succeed in freeing the victim, start CPR at once if the victim is not breathing.

In the case of electric shock, the muscles controlling the breathing system are paralyzed or deeply depressed, or carbon monoxide has displaced oxygen in the blood stream. When these cases are encountered, CPR must be done for long periods of time.

There are cases where the victim may be breathing, but may still need help. In situations such as this, the person giving artificial resuscitation should time efforts to coincide with the victim's attempt to breathe without help.

If vomiting occurs during artificial respiration, quickly turn the victim to the side, wipe out the mouth, reposition the victim and then continue artificial resuscitation.

When the victim is revived, he or she should be kept as quiet as possible until breathing regularly. The victim should be kept covered and otherwise treated for shock until suitable transportation is available, or until a physician arrives.

CPR should be continued until the victim begins to breathe on his or her own, until a physician pronounces the victim dead, or until the victim appears to be dead beyond any doubt.

A doctor's care is necessary during the recovery period, as respiratory and other disturbances may develop as an aftermath.

A few simple procedures should be followed when moving tall equipment around overhead lines:

1. Plan and inspect the route you will travel. Know the height of your equipment and all power lines.
2. Notify the power company of your plans. They will cooperate with you if possible in providing safe transportation.
3. Secure all swinging parts before moving. Consider the possibility of uneven ground.
4. Do not raise power lines for any reason.
5. Have trained personnel observe equipment in hazardous areas.

Note

Acts of vandalism such as breaking insulators and bulbs, defacing signs, and many other types of malicious destruction, may result in an arrest to the person inflicting the damage. A heavy fine or imprisonment could result from this type of activity.

Such malicious destruction can result in a loss to the power supplier for the cost of repairs and labor, and also to their employees, who must risk extra dangers while repairing the damage.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Kenneth R. Bolen, Director of Cooperative Extension, University of Nebraska, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

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