

Emergency Procedure

What to do if your agricultural machinery comes into contact with an overhead line:

- Never touch overhead power line conductors.
- Assume the line / wires are alive, even if they are not sparking.
- Remember that, even if they are dead, the wires can become alive again with no notice. This may happen automatically after a few seconds, or they could be re-energised remotely up to several hours later if SSEPD is not aware that the line has been damaged.
- If you can, use your mobile telephone to call the emergency services. Give them your location as accurately as you can. Tell them that there are electricity wires involved and ask them to inform SSEPD.
- If your machinery is in contact with an electricity wire or within five metres of a damaged overhead wire then stay inside your vehicle until the emergency services or SSEPD arrive unless there is a real threat of fire.
- Once a wire is on the ground you do not have to touch it to be killed. The current may travel a significant distance through the ground and even further if the wire has fallen on a fence or other metallic objects. Keep well clear.
- If you have to get out, then try and JUMP clear rather than stepping off the vehicle. Jump as far away as you can, try to land on your feet and then RUN away at least 10 metres.
- Keep others away even if you are in the cab. Someone else touching your vehicle could be fatal to them.
- The emergency services have been briefed on how to undertake rescues in proximity to damaged overhead lines. An SSEPD engineer will confirm when the power has been turned off and the rescue can proceed safely.

Emergency Contact

In an emergency, call the appropriate number below:

North of Scotland 0800 300 999

Central Southern England 08000 72 72 82

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200 Dunkeld Road
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SAFETY INFORMATION FOR FARMERS AND AGRICULTURAL CONTRACTORS

Keep safe from
Electricity Overhead Lines



Introduction

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

Approximately five people die each year due to accidental contact with overhead power lines. The use of agricultural machinery (such as combine harvesters, tipping trailers, boom sprayers and loaders) and equipment (such as irrigation pipes and ladders) as well as activities such as stacking can often bring farmers and agricultural contractors close to such power lines.

This leaflet provides a basic guide to maximise your chances of remaining safe when:

- ploughing;
- using Irrigation pipes and ladders;
- using combine harvesters;
- loading or unloading vehicles;
- using tipper wagons or trailers in fields;
- stacking materials; and
- in the vicinity of electricity overhead power lines.

This information should be used in conjunction with HSE guidance, 'Shock Horror'.

Some general key points

- Electricity systems carry voltages up to 400,000 volts. Even 230 volts (domestic voltage) can be lethal.
- Never assume that electrical equipment is dead, even if the wires have fallen or broken.
- Remember that the power can be switched back on at any time, without warning.
- Touching electricity wires or objects / persons in contact with the wires can be fatal.
- Even the lowest voltage overhead lines can produce 10,000 times more current than is required to kill a person.

- Electricity can jump gaps.
- Trees, string, ropes, suspension lines and water can conduct electricity.
- Rubber boots will not protect you.
- Most overhead electricity wires are not insulated.
- Don't assume wires on wood poles are telephone wires.

General information:

- It is not only agricultural equipment and machinery which present a danger. A jet of water or liquid slurry can cause discharge of electricity and a high risk of fatal or severe injury.
- Injuries are often caused by a combination of things. You may be tired after a long day which affects your concentration.
- Always carry a mobile telephone when you are in the field, to call the emergency services in an emergency.

Think ahead:

- Select your machinery and equipment carefully so it cannot come into contact with overhead power lines.
- Assess your safe working clearances to overhead lines (refer GS6 and AIS8).
- Use your machinery and equipment safely.
- Plan your work so it avoids high-risk areas.
- Use alternative access points and routes to fields which avoid crossing under overhead power lines.
- Keep an eye out for children and visitors on your land.
- Brief this information to your agricultural contractors.
- Don't stack anything directly under or near to overhead lines.

Consult SSE Power Distribution:

Talk to SSE Power Distribution (SSEPD), look on their website (www.ssepd.co.uk). They will provide free information and advice about the precautions and safe working practices to be followed near overhead electric power lines.

Know your overhead power line routes:

- Find and note the routes and operating voltages of overhead power lines running across your land or near its boundaries. The local electricity company will supply this information on request.
- Mark these routes and voltages on your farm map.
- Use the farm map as a reference when planning cropping and other work, instructing machine operators and contractors, or buying new equipment.

Measure your machinery:

The increases in size of farm machinery means it is important that you consider the size of both your own machinery and that used by your contractors on your land.

- Find out the maximum height and vertical reach of all your machinery and equipment and that of your contractors'.
- Consider the risks from overhead power lines when buying new or used machinery.
- Overhead lines should be at a minimum clearance from the ground of 5.2 metres (17 feet). However live equipment fitted on poles maybe as low as 4.3 metres (14 feet).

Inform people:

Include the emergency telephone number of Scottish and Southern Energy on your farm map and in your list of telephone contacts.

- Make sure everyone who is working on your land is aware of the presence of overhead lines (see back cover).