

Farmers & Agricultural Contractors

TOP TIPS

on staying safe in the agricultural industry

- Any power lines, electricity substations or electrical engineering equipment may be live and could kill you. Do not touch them directly or through 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 wires — many overhead power lines are supported on poles.
- If an overhead power line has fallen to the ground 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 liquid. You do not need to touch the power line to be killed by it.

In an emergency dial **999** and tell them electricity is involved.

Call **105** if you have a safety concern related to the electricity network or if you spot damage to overhead power lines and substations that could put you, or someone else, in danger.



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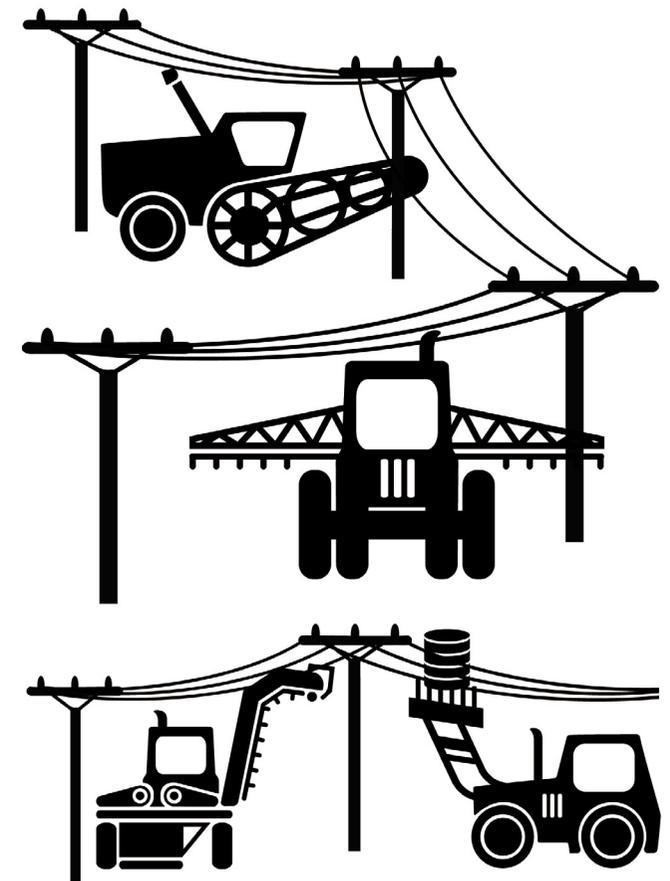
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The Voice of the Networks



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Safety advice when working in the vicinity of overhead power lines.



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Vital Safety, delivered safely

There are overhead power lines criss-crossing the country. Often unnoticed, they are essential to provide electricity to the 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.

Contact with electricity can kill, cause serious burns and disabling injuries. The energy network is designed to keep you safe, but on average two people are killed and more many injured each year in the UK when agricultural machinery and equipment comes into contact or close proximity to overhead power lines.

LOOK OUT, LOOK UP!

Overhead power lines in rural areas are often at a lower level on top of wooden poles as well as on the larger pylons that are often seen across the countryside. The current travelling along these lines is just over half that of the pylons but it is still 1,000 times the voltage of a plug socket in the home. This voltage can kill you and extra care must 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 must take extra care when:

- Using machinery such as telehandlers, 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, carrying a mobile phone at all times and having the national single emergency number 105 stored on it. This information can be found on the back of this leaflet.



How to avoid...

- 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 high risk activities within 10 metres (horizontally) of overhead power lines, e.g. stacking materials, tipping trailers, erecting polytunnels, folding sprayer booms, moving irrigation pipes, operating material handlers, etc.
- Carry long objects horizontally as electricity can jump across gaps.
- Avoid all work around and access routes under overhead power lines but ensure any machinery that is used is not too big to work in the vicinity of them and maintain a 5 metre distance at all times.
- Do not raise the level of ground underneath power lines.

Think ahead

- Find the routes of all overhead power lines on your land or near your boundaries and mark these on your farm map along with the maximum working heights permitted under each span.
- Overhead power 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). Make sure you have details of the maximum working heights permitted under each span of overhead line. Ensure those using your equipment and that of any contractors take this into account and know the full maximum height and vertical reach.
- Find a copy of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) leaflets *GS6* and *A/S8* and use them to plan your work: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ais8.pdf and www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/gs6.pdf.

What to do if...

If you inadvertently come into contact with an overhead power line and the machine is not operable or cannot be driven clear of the line:

- Stay in the cab.
- Phone the electricity network operator using the 105 number.
- Instruct everyone outside the vehicle not to approach it.
- Do not exit the cab until given confirmation by the electricity network operator that it is safe to do so.

If the machine is inoperable or cannot be driven free and there is risk of fire or other immediate hazard:

- If you must get off then you must 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 unless told by the electricity network operator it is safe.
- Keep others away from the vehicle. Touching it or even getting too close could kill them.

Simple actions can save lives

Save the single national emergency number 105 to your phone and ensure your staff and contractors do the same. Make sure anyone working on your land knows the safety advice and information set out above, including the location of overhead power lines on your land, and train them on the actions they need to take.

Notify those entering your property such as delivery drivers and contractors on the location of overhead power lines.