

Electrical Safety

September 20, 2011 “A young adult male was killed in a farming accident that sent him and his father to hospital. The two were working at about 4:30 p.m. on Sept. 20 on their property near Chauvin, Alta., when a piece of farm equipment was pushed into the overhead power lines. Once the equipment made contact with the lines it electrocuted the 24-year-old male, who was pushing the grain auger. The father of the 24-year-old came to his son's aid and when he touched the auger to move it, he was shocked and knocked to the ground. Wainwright RCMP, Chauvin Fire and EMS were called to the property shortly after the incident. Both males were rushed to Wainwright hospital by ambulance. In hospital the son succumbed to his injuries and was pronounced dead. The father is in stable condition with electrical burns to his body. [sic]” Source: <http://www.meridianbooster.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=3311580>

September 26, 2011 “Police say a 21-year-old Maine man has died in an electrical accident while installing a fan at a farm in Union. The Knox County Sheriff's Department says Steven Crossley was electrocuted Saturday afternoon at the Winter Winds Farm. Sheriff Donna Dennison said Crossley incorrectly wired a power cord while installing a fan inside a barn. Dennis said a farmhand found Crossley and called police. He was pronounced dead at the scene. [sic]” Source: <http://www.onlinesentinel.com/news/Man-electrocuted-at-farm-in-Union.html>

There is no doubt that electricity is helpful in agricultural work. It is used in processing, lighting, heating, ventilation, irrigation, and many other tasks. However, it can be a dangerous resource. Electrical shock can occur from faulty wiring in buildings and irrigation systems, frayed power cords, machinery and tools, and power lines. Water, either weather related or otherwise, can increase the risk for electric shock. A person does not have to come in direct contact with an electrical source in order to be electrocuted. Currents can move through open space in order to return to the ground. Recommendations to prevent electric shock or electrocution are innumerable. Some practical tips are listed below, but much of electrical safety comes down to common sense.



- Protect wiring from corrosive or abrasive environments.
- Check wiring in buildings, irrigation systems, power tools and machinery monthly.
- Only use electric devices with 3 pronged plugs.
- Use a GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter) plug in moist or outdoor environments.
- Do not use metal ladders around power lines.
- Locate overhead and underground power lines. Document their location and height; communicate this information to all workers.
- Make sure all equipment is lowered to a safe position before it is moved.
- Locate irrigation pipe storage away from power lines.
- Trim trees away from power lines.
- Always turn off the electrical power and lock out power boxes before performing maintenance.
- Never touch electric tools when your hands are wet.
- Do not operate machinery or power tools while standing in water or working in moist environments.

Resources:

https://agrillifebookstore.org/tmppdfs/viewpdf_2009_29282.pdf?CFID=16124869&CFTOKEN=50f1613440433a44-DAE28AAC-A5E0-0E22-42EAE069F317D353&jsessionid=9030825de74df9802d9a1f797d7666392cc5

<http://www.cals.uidaho.edu/agsafety/frmsaf12.pdf>