

WORKING WITH OVERHEAD POWERLINES

Overhead powerlines carry a powerful electric charge and if machinery or equipment come into contact with them, the consequences can be fatal.

On average, 2 people are killed whilst others endure life changing injuries every year in the UK due to overhead powerlines.

The risk to farmworkers is all year round. Every year approximately 225 reported incidents occur where farm vehicles or machinery comes into contact with overhead lines.

And you do not even have to touch the line! At high voltages, electricity can jump gaps up 5 metres. So even getting too close to overhead powerlines can be dangerous.

TOP TIPS:

- ✓ Always assume that a powerline is live unless, and until, the owner of the line has confirmed that it is dead.
- ✓ Even though powerlines are normally visible, people are less aware of them when they are busy at work, especially at night.
- ✓ Find out the heights and locations of overhead powerlines crossing land you farm and mark these on a map.
- ✓ Do not store materials, stack bales or store crops underneath overhead power lines.
- ✓ When buying new machinery, make sure you are aware of its maximum height and make sure that there is enough clearance to pass safely beneath overhead powerlines on your land.
- ✓ Make sure people working on your farm, including contractors, are aware of the heights of overhead powerlines so that they can plan their work to reduce the risk of coming into contact with them.
- ✓ Equipment that is capable of contacting overhead powerline should not work within 10 metres of the line.



Before starting the job, stop and think...

Think about the job you are going to do and make preparations to do the whole task safely.

Identify areas where it is unsafe for materials handlers, tipping lorries and trainers to work and mark them on a map.

If you happen upon an accident involving overhead powerlines

- Stay calm, keep clear and call for help.
- Check your What3Words address as this can help identify exactly where the line is and where you are.
- Call 105 (the national number for power emergencies). Your call will go through to your local electricity distribution company. Give them your What3Words address and tell them to disconnect the power as there has been an accident.
- If a piece of machinery or equipment make contact, DO NOT touch it. Stand well clear. The driver of a vehicle which has come into contact with an overhead powerline should remain safe **by staying in the cab**.
- Keep everyone else out of the way.
- Call the emergency services. Give them your location and explain the nature of the injury.

Assist the injured person

- Remind the victim what they should be doing, whilst keeping yourself at a safe distance.
- Tell them to **STAY** in the cab until the power network confirms the line is off.
- Ask the driver to **DRIVE** clear of the wires, if they can.
- **IF IT ISN'T SAFE TO STAY IN THE CAB THEN JUMP WELL CLEAR.** Make leaping strides so that one foot is off the ground at all times until you are at least 5 metres away.
- **NEVER RETURN TO THE VEHICLE** - powerlines can re-energise without warning.

Remember...

Discuss risks regularly with the whole team, and train everyone on safe working practices and emergency procedures.

Make sure everyone carries a mobile phone with them. Have relevant emergency information and contacts programmed in.