

The Line We Can't See

Have you ever been looking at something in the distance and the person next to you kept saying, "it's right there!" You look and look and then, almost magically, it appears. And, you wonder how could you have not seen it when it was there the whole time!

The same goes for our overhead power lines. They are right in front of us. We might even walk past a pole or two, and yet they blend into the landscape. We fail to see them when they are right there . . . until something makes contact with power line. When that happens, outages can occur, or worse, someone can get hurt.



The overhead power lines are important to keep the electricity flowing to our homes, farms and businesses. We need this power. Yet, more importantly, we need to know how to have this power, safely. And, we need you to help us.

So, what can you do? First, **stop, look up and look around to find the power lines before** you begin the task you set out to do today and then follow these safety tips.

Make sure your equipment can clear the line when moving underneath. Some farm equipment may be able to pass under the line only when it is in its lowest position. You also might have an antenna or communication equipment that extends up. If the ground underneath the line has a hump, it might change your clearance. And, your equipment moving over uneven or rough ground can cause booms to sway or bounce and make contact. If you can, avoid passing underneath a line with your equipment by finding a different route.

Don't spray water on power lines, such as with irrigation systems. Water is an excellent conductor of electricity, as are the pipes used for irrigation systems. Jets of water from irrigation guns can conduct electricity, create a circuit and energize the equipment. Some long-boom irrigators have booms that can be folded and raised vertically for easy movement. When a boom is moved, particularly if it is raised vertically, it can come into contact with overhead power lines.

Don't stack items below power lines. The stacked items could be stacked so high, they reach the power lines. And, in order to move them, you have to use equipment that could make contact when reaching for them.

Report trees that have grown in to the power lines. We often look at the beautiful trees we have in our yard and once again we fail to see the line going thru them. When a line is in a tree, it contributes to outages as storms blow through, or a tree could land on the line tearing it down. Yet, more importantly, if a child climbed that tree, they could come in contact with the line.

Carry/move long items that could contact power lines horizontally. It might be time to do some roofing or siding on your home or barn. As you move the ladder into place, don't bring it into contact with the line. Again, remember to look up! And, this action applies to anything long you might be using.

And, one final safety tip is simple and powerful - **Don't ever touch anything in contact with a power line and never touch a line on the ground.** It takes all of us to work together to deliver and maintain power, safely. And, I know you can do it – you got it!