



***ELECTRICAL SAFETY***

Electricity is an essential source of energy for most agricultural-related operations. However, fewer sources have a greater potential to cause harm than electricity. Working safely with electricity is possible if you are trained in, understand, and follow certain basic ground rules.

By its nature, electricity will take the path of least resistance to the ground. If your body happens to be in that path, even a small amount of electric current can have fatal effects. The risk of shock or electrocution is greatest around metal objects and in damp conditions. Therefore, make sure all electric equipment, switch enclosures, and conduit systems are properly grounded and that all-external or damp operations are wired for wet conditions. When working in damp areas, wear personal protective equipment such as rubber gloves and boots; use rubber mats, insulated tools, and rubber sheets to protect you from exposed metal.

Keep your electrical system in good operating condition. Damage and injuries can occur when equipment is defective. So inspect your electrical equipment, outlets, plugs, and cords before each use. Remove, tag, and have repaired any faulty equipment. Make sure outlets and cords are of adequate size and length to prevent electric overload. If cords must cross a traffic area, protect them with planks or other means.

Make sure you and other workers follow lockout and tagout procedures. Treat every electric wire as if it were a live one. Stop using a tool or appliance if a slight shock or tingling is felt. Turn off the power if the smell of hot or burning substance is detected or if smoke, sparks, or flickering lights are noticed.

Contact with overhead power supply lines is one of the most frequent electrical-related killer in agriculture. Equipment commonly involved in such contact includes portable elevators and augers, irrigation pipes, and harvesting machinery. Workers using high clearance devices should continually be aware of the dangers and take sensible precautions to avoid contact with overhead lines. If an overhead line breaks, keep away from the wire and everything it touches then call the power company to shut off the electricity. Only qualified electricians should repair electrical equipment or work on energized lines.

Because accidents can happen, make sure those who work on or around energized electrical equipment are trained in emergency response and CPR.