



On this second day of Stand Up 4 Grain Safety week 2022, we turn our attention to electrical safety. Electricity is everywhere both at work and at home. Consider these fun facts about electricity:

- Electricity travels at the speed of light, about 186,411 miles per second.
- A spark of static electricity can measure up to 3,000 volts
- The first four common items to be powered by electricity were a sewing machine, fan, kettle, and toaster.
- The worlds biggest lightbulb is in Edison, New Jersey. It's 14 ft tall, weighs 8 tons, and sits on top of the Thomas Edison Memorial Tower.

As useful as electricity is, it is also one of the most hazardous parts of working in agriculture. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1 in 10 farmers will be electrocuted on the job. Also, farmers and elevator employees have an 8% chance of being electrocuted while working. Common causes of these injuries are:

- Contact with overhead power lines
- Exposed underground power lines
- Damaged wiring in equipment and buildings
- Damaged extension cords

While we can't avoid electricity entirely, there are things we can all do to prevent an accident.

- Keep a safe distance from overhead powerlines, especially when working with tall equipment such as augers, ladders, and loaders. **Maintain a distance of at least 10 ft from the top of the equipment and the power line.**
- If the vehicle you are in comes in contact with a power line or is struck by lightning, remain in the vehicle unless it is on fire. Do not touch anything and call 911. If you must exit, open the door, and jump away from the vehicle and keep both feet together. Once you are clear of the vehicle, shuffle away, keeping both feet on the ground and get at least 50 ft away or further.
- Always call before you dig. JULIE (Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators) is a free service in Illinois to locate underground utilities to keep you safe while digging. In Illinois call 811 or visit juliebeforeyoudig.com to schedule 2 days before you plan on digging.
- Get in the habit of inspecting electrical wiring. If you see broken or exposed wires or electrical burn marks, then make sure repairs are complete before flipping the switch. Repairs should be completed by a trained electrician. Never assume equipment or systems are de-energized, always test to be sure.
- Never use a damaged extension cord or attempt to repair one. Once an extension cord becomes damaged, it loses the UL safety rating and is not safe for use unless repaired by a UL certified repair shop. Generally, it is cheaper to replace the cord than it is to repair it.
- Avoid being near or climbing on metal structures such as grain bins, grain legs, or metal buildings whenever lightning is around.

Remember, no job is so urgent that you can't take the time to work safely, especially if it involves electricity.

This special edition Stand Up 4 Grain Safety bulletin is a publication by Maplehurst Farms and Fehr-Graham. Suggestions for content are welcome. Please send all questions or suggestions to safety@maplehurstfarms.com