



News Release

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Electrical safety is no accident – Know how to be safe around electricity

Program highlights online videos with personal stories during May, National Electrical Safety Month

West Point NE -- Accidents and fires involving electricity result in more than a thousand deaths and tens of thousands of injuries each year. The majority of those tragedies could be prevented with greater awareness of how to stay safe. Always watch for overhead power lines.

Last fall near Wisner is a good example of always knowing where the overhead power lines are. As a farmer was passing under the lines with his combine, it caught the neutral line and caused it to pull and break. As it swung around, it connected with an energized line and caused a spark. The spark caused a fire to start near his tractor and wagon full of grain. The tractor had sat overnight and the battery was dead so was unable to be moved. The tractor and grain cart had extensive fire damage and could've caused greater problems since the farmer proceeded to roll the neutral line so cars passing wouldn't drive over it. This is extremely dangerous as the line could be energized. Fatal electrical accidents happen in the blink of an eye. Please just be careful of what is around you. It is best to have a spotter on the ground that can watch and make sure there is enough room. If a vehicle should come in contact with a power line, stay in the vehicle and call CCPPD or 911 to report it as quickly as possible.

New this year on Safe Electricity's website (www.SafeElectricity.org) is the story of a Central Illinois farmer, Jim Flach, who was fatally injured in an accident involving power line contact with his sprayer. Told by his family, the story helps large equipment operators understand how to avoid contact with overhead lines and equally important, how to survive such an accident if equipment does contact lines.

Another story features two teenagers that survived their auto accident involving power lines because they had learned the steps to take to stay safe. The safety principles apply to all vehicles - whether the auto

involved is a car or large piece of equipment. They explained how they stayed in the vehicle until help arrived. They had hit a power line pole and the line ended up on top of their vehicle.

Near Bancroft last fall was a similar accident. A farmer was driving his tractor and grain cart next to the fence line and the tire on the grain cart clipped a side of a power line pole. The pole snapped and dropped the lines near the top of his tractor. He was able to avoid the lines from hitting the tractor, but always be cautious of your surroundings and know what to do if an accident should happen. If a line would topple on the vehicle you are in, don't get out of the vehicle as the line may still be energized. Electricity is always looking for a quick path to ground. If a person touches the ground as they are touching the vehicle that is energized, they are a sure path and it could be fatal! If you do need to exit the vehicle because it's on fire, go to the edge and jump from it with both feet together. That will ensure that you don't touch the vehicle as you are jumping from it and making a path to ground.

The life changing impacts of power line accidents are detailed in another video featuring accident survivor Shawn Miller and his family from Central Indiana, whose lives were changed forever due to his severe injuries. He was putting up Christmas lights for his mom and threw them into a tree as they came in contact with a 7200 volt power line. He had 27 exit wounds, the loss of one hand, and a finger on the other hand. He miraculously survived, but talks about how fast it happened and not to take things for granted.

The need for electrical safety is important for everyone, youth or adult, residential, business or industrial. A 30 minute live power line demonstration can be seen on the Safe Electricity website that illustrates indoor and outdoor safety considerations related to home, work and play.

To involve your children in the observance of Electrical Safety Month, invite them to visit SafeElectricity.org to watch videos, play games, and do science experiments. Interactive elements include the new E-Smart Kids site, with cool video segments in which kids teach other kids about electricity basics and several safety topics. Other popular features are the extensive Electric Universe and EIA kids. All of these have resources on electrical safety as well as efficiency - not only for youth but for parents as well as teachers. Educators will find classroom plans, experiments and activities that all meet National Science Education standards.

Visit www.ccppd.com or www.SafeElectricity.org for more information on electrical safety.

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For more information and videos on electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org. Safe Electricity is a program of the Energy Education Council, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting electrical safety and energy efficiency, and supported by a coalition of hundreds of organizations, including electric utilities, educators and other entities committed to promoting safe use of electricity.