



Staying Safe on the Farm

COLLINSVILLE, IL – On a cold day in December last year, 500 customers in rural St. Clair County, just north of Prairie Du Rocher, lost power when a tractor made contact with an Ameren Illinois electric line in a farm field. While contact with electric or natural gas facilities in the field can result in power outages, it can have far more serious consequences for the farmer.

In conjunction with National Farm Safety and Health Week September 15-21, Ameren Illinois is encouraging farmers and others involved in the industry to save lives by operating safely around power equipment this Fall.

“We receive far too many reports of incidents involving farm equipment and our infrastructure,” said Karen Boulanger, Ameren Illinois Director of Safety. “Inadvertent contact with overhead electric power lines or natural gas pipeline buried beneath the ground is dangerous for farmers working in the field.”

To recognize National Farm Safety and Health Week and the beginning of harvest season, Ameren Illinois offers the following safety tips:

1. Look up, down, side-to-side and constantly scan for potential hazards. Awareness is the key to mitigating the potential for dangerous situation.
2. Always utilize a spotter when operating or moving equipment. A spotter can help identify hazards that may not be visible in your line of sight.
3. Remember to lower raised machinery when exiting the field, as many overhead power lines border roads.
4. Call Ameren Illinois at 800.755.5000 if you notice power lines that appear to be drooping or sagging. Never try and remedy the situation yourself.
5. If farm equipment comes into contact with overhead power lines, assume that both the equipment and surrounding area is energized. Remain inside the cab until Ameren Illinois arrives to de-energize the line. Stepping out could cause your body to become the path to ground for electricity, resulting in electrocution.
6. Calling 811 before beginning any projects that require deep digging (e.g. tile plowing and setting fence posts) can reduce the potential for underground facility strikes.
7. Don’t put your mind on autopilot when operating equipment. Even though high-tech auto guidance GPS systems are becoming increasingly prevalent inside cabs, GPS cannot always recognize potential hazards.

“Most importantly, we want farmers to know that they should call Ameren Illinois at 800.755.5000 if they have any questions or concerns,” added Boulanger. “Safety on the farm is critically important. It’s a message that we cannot reinforce enough.”