



# SAFETY ALERT

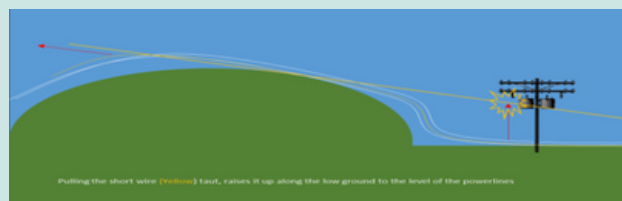
# Overhead power lines

## WHAT HAPPENED?

**Incident one:** A contractor unloaded corn waste into a bunker, then drove around to the truck wash area. The bin was raised to wash out but the operator didn't see the overhead power lines. The bin contacted the lines, causing a short to several farms. The operator also received an electrical shock when exiting the truck.



**Incident two:** A 400 to 500 metre 3-wire electric fence was being put up on rolling hill country. The operator got to the end of the run, and realised that one reel was two metres short to tie off. To try to bridge the gap he pulled the wires, which raised the short wire 8-10 metres upwards, making contact with overhead power lines which were out of his field of vision, over from the ridge he was working on. The operator sustained an electric shock.



## HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND?

**Pre-start planning:** As with any task, plan the job ahead. Identify the hazards in the area before you start the job and plan to work around them.

**Stop, think and then do.** Consider the following points to reduce the risks when working around power lines:

- See the danger before you start the job. Overhead power lines can become part of the scenery, so it can be easy to forget the power lines are there. **LOOK OUT – LOOK UP**
- Keep your distance - when working close to overhead power lines, it is important to maintain a minimum safe working distance of four metres. You don't even need to contact the lines, as high voltage electricity can arc over to you.
- Tipping trucks and trailers, mobile augers, front end loaders and livestock trucks (loading and unloading under power wires) are at risk of coming into contact with power lines.
- Fencing wire - fence wire flicking upwards and touching or close to overhead power lines has the potential to injure or kill. If you can't avoid working near overhead power lines or passing under them, be on your guard.
- Parking - park machinery or trucks away from overhead power lines. Consider putting no parking signs or barriers under lines in yards/around buildings.
- Travelling - plan a route that keeps you clear of power lines. Tractors with raised drills or implements may contact overhead power lines.
- Handling equipment - when you are loading/unloading pipes, using ladders or trimming trees/hedges, make sure you know what's above you.
- Safety switches - properly installed Residual Current Devices (RCD) can help protect by 'tripping' the current if something goes wrong.
- **Brief contractors about hazards before they start a job.**