

Hurried Harvest Calls For Increased Electrical Safety

COLUMBIA, MO.

Farmers in a hurry to complete the most-delayed corn harvest in 30 years are fighting wet fields and added stress, making them vulnerable to injuries, said University of Missouri Extension farm safety specialist.

“When harvest is in full swing, electrical safety is a must around the farm,” said Karen Funkenbusch, who offers these tips for a safe harvest:

- Examine all wiring associated with electrical panels, lighting, equipment, disconnects and outlets.
- Use extra care when operating large farm equipment near electrical lines and poles as well as underground utilities.
- When using equipment like elevated trucks, raised conveyors or other large folding farm implements, survey the area to be sure it is free of potential hazards.
- Be aware of the clearance your equipment needs when truck beds are elevated or har-

vest arms are fully extended.

If your equipment has snagged an overhead power line, remain inside the vehicle, Funkenbusch said. Try to drive the equipment away from the hazard. If you cannot drive it away, stay where you are and wait for rescue. Call 911 and your local electric company, or ask someone to call for you.

If you must get off the equipment because of fire or other danger, remember that your body should never contact the ground and metal equipment at the same time. Jump clear and hop or shuffle away. Hopping with feet together or shuffling prevents your body from conducting electricity into the ground.

Tires are not insulators, she noted. Rubber is not a good conductor of electricity, but metal found in tires is. If a power line is in contact with your vehicle, electricity will travel through the metal skin and tires.

Never touch a down power line or anything connected to it. A live wire may whip or sweep over an area. △

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