



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ameren Illinois Reminds Farmers to Take Safety Precautions around Electric and Natural Gas Equipment

National Farm Safety and Health Week is September 15-21

Collinsville, IL – As part of National Farm Safety and Health Week 2019, Ameren Illinois is reminding farmers to take safety precautions around electric and natural gas infrastructure during the fall harvest season.

Reports of accidents involving farm equipment making contact with electric lines and natural gas equipment increase during harvest season. Many of these incidents can be avoided with heightened awareness and attention to farm safety protocols.

"Illinois farmers are working from dawn until dusk this fall," said Richard J. Mark, Chairman and President of Ameren Illinois. "With increasingly large machinery in use, it is important that farmers look up, down and continually scan their surroundings for potential hazards. Tactics such as using a spotter and lowering equipment when crossing a road can truly make a difference when it comes to safety on the farm."

Contacting power lines or even getting too close can cause the equipment and the surrounding area to become energized. As a rule of thumb, farmers should maintain a minimum 10-foot clearance radius in all directions while operating equipment in the vicinity of overhead power lines. It's important to remember that auto-guidance GPS systems found in most modern farm vehicles cannot always detect overhead hazards.

If electrical contact occurs, farmers should immediately call Ameren Illinois at 800.755.5000 and wait calmly inside the cab until the line is de-energized. Exiting the cab while a power line is energized can cause the body to become a path to ground for the electricity, resulting in electrocution.

In addition to overhead hazards, farmers also need to be mindful of energy infrastructure that is not readily visible. To prevent contact with natural-gas equipment, farmers should keep a vigilant eye out for above ground piping and call 811 before tile plowing, setting fence posts or beginning any deep-digging projects outside of routine farm tillage.

"We're committed to doing all we can to ensure the safety and well-being of the hard-working farmers in central and southern Illinois," added Mark. "National Farm Safety and Health Week is the perfect time to remind farmers that focusing on safety can truly save lives."

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