
Talking Points

Contractor and Large Equipment Operator Safety

- Always use proper safety equipment. Get it inspected regularly to ensure it is still in good working order.
- Equipment operators should always beware of their proximity to power lines. If maneuvering near them, use spotters with a wider view to help guide equipment operating in tight areas.
- Equipment should be kept at least 10 feet (that distance increases for each kV above 50 kV) from power lines in all directions, and regulations for cranes increase that distance to a 20-foot minimum.
- If a machine or ladder comes close or touches a power line, do not touch it and warn others to stay back. Anyone touching or even standing nearby is at risk of electrocution.
- If you are on equipment that makes contact with a power line—stay put. Do not attempt to climb off the equipment because you do not want to become the path to ground for the electricity. Call for help, and warn others in the area to stay back until help has been called and the line has been de-energized, regardless of its voltage.
- Workers at job sites should have quick access to the emergency phone number of the local electric utility, which should be alerted to de-energize a line if contact is made by equipment.
- Follow lock out/tag out procedures.
- Call 8-1-1 before you dig and get underground utilities identified. Electricity, gas, and other underground utilities can be deadly if you make contact with them.

General Electric Tool Safety

- Check the cords of your power tools before you use them. If they are damaged, do not use them or try to repair them yourself. Tag all damaged tools as damaged so that everyone else knows not to use them as well.
- Always unplug your tools before servicing or cleaning them. Ensure that they are turned off before you disconnect them to prevent accidental starting.
- Tools that have ground prongs should be plugged only into three-pronged outlets. Never remove the ground prong. Never use a plug that has its ground prong removed.
- Test circuits and conductors before working on them.
- Keep your work area dry when working with anything electric. Remember, water + electricity = danger.
- Always use ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection. Use a portable GFCI if your work site outlets do not have them.

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.