

Safety Tips

Here are some general safety advice for your home and farm



Around the Home

- Understand your home's electrical system. Make a map showing which fuse or circuit breaker controls each switch, light or outlet.
- Use correct bulb wattage in fixtures. Light bulbs with wattages that are too high for the light fixture can overheat the fixture and start a fire.
- Heavy reliance on power strips is an indication that you have too few outlets to address your needs. Have additional outlets installed by a qualified, licensed electrician.
- Assume that all overhead wires are energized at lethal voltages. Never assume that a wire is safe to touch even if it is down or appears to be insulated.
- In homes with small children, make sure your home has tamper-resistant (TR) receptacles.
- Never use a frayed or damaged extension cord. Damaged cords may have exposed wires that can be a fire and shock hazard.
- For outdoor equipment, use lighting and power tools that have the label of an independent test laboratory and make sure they are made for outdoor use.
- If an appliance is malfunctioning, if there is another electrical malfunction in your home, or if the circuit breaker flipped during a power outage, it may be necessary to cut off or switch on the power at the breaker box. If you must flip a switch at the break box, always remember to step away and look away. You want to protect your eyes and body just in case an arc should occur.
- Always be aware of power lines, especially when working with long metal tools like ladders, pool skimmers, and pruning poles or when working on a roof. Keep ladders 10 feet away from power lines.
- If the outdoor project involves digging, like planting a tree for example, make sure to call 811 to have public utility lines marked in your yard. This service is free and prevents damage and injury.
- Make sure all outdoor outlets are equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). A GFCI monitors the flow of electricity in a circuit. If there is any irregularity, the GFCI will shut off the electric current. If the outdoor outlets do not have a GFCI, install one or purchase a portable GFCI.



Around the Farm

- Make sure you have ample clearance when moving large machinery such as combines, grain augers, pickers, bailers, and front-end loaders. Check every year, as equipment sizes or soil conditions may change.
- If it is raining or the ground is wet, do not use electric power or yard tools.
- Use heavy-duty, three-prong extension cords for tools with three-prong plugs. Never remove or bend back the third prong on extension cords. It is a safety feature designed to reduce the risk of electrocution or shock.
- Never use a frayed or damaged extension cord. Damaged cords may have exposed wires that can be a fire and shock hazard.
- Train all farm workers to keep an eye out for overhead power lines.
- Clear blockages on equipment ventilation openings.
- Do not carry an appliance by its cord. Pull the plug; never pull the cord to disengage from an outlet.
- Unplug tools when not in use, because they may have parts that remain electrically live otherwise.
- Use a spotter when moving machinery around the farm. It can be difficult to judge how close a piece of machinery is from the driver's seat.