

## **FIRELANDS ELECTRIC CO-OP REMINDS MEMBERS OF OVERHEAD POWER LINE DANGERS**

When it comes to safety, Firelands Electric Cooperative takes its job very seriously. It can be a matter of life or death — for the co-op’s members and its employees. Although most people are familiar with the dangers of improper electric use inside their home, many don’t realize the potential hazards associated with outside power lines.

While 120 volts of power run through your home, the lines connected to power poles are carrying 7,200 volts of electricity. That’s 33 times what flows into your outlets! In addition, overhead power lines are not insulated like the wires and cords inside your home. The coating you may see on these high-voltage power lines is merely weatherproofing, and will not protect you from electric shock.

That’s why it’s important to steer clear of all overhead wires. Keep ladders, chainsaws, pruning shears, and other lawn equipment and vehicles at least 10 feet away. Maintaining this distance is crucial, because electricity can arc, or jump, from power lines to nearby objects or people. Since electricity travels at 186,000 miles per second, you cannot move fast enough to get out of its path, and the voltage in these power lines is enough to kill.

This is also why you should NEVER climb a utility pole — not even to retrieve a kite, a balloon, or the family pet. Only linemen, who have the proper training and safety equipment, should ever go up an electric pole.

Firelands Electric’s linemen complete an apprenticeship and years of rigorous training before they can even take part in certain repair and maintenance projects. For instance, a lineman must have at least three years of experience before they are able to enter the 10-foot “safety zone” that surrounds power lines. In addition, linemen also wear specially-designed gloves, rubber sleeves, fire-resistant clothing, and other safety gear to protect themselves on the job.

The cooperative wants to keep our members safe. Remember to never trim trees, work, or play near electric lines. If you have a concern regarding poles or overhead wires, contact the cooperative. Electricity powers lives, but it must be treated with respect — for everyone’s safety.

For more electrical safety information, contact Firelands Electric Cooperative, a Touchstone Energy Partner, by visiting [www.FirelandsEC.com](http://www.FirelandsEC.com) or calling the cooperative at 1-800-533-8658.