

A guide to your *SAFE* home improvement project

When you're working on a home improvement project, electricity may be the best assistant you have for completing the job quickly and easily. Unfortunately, if you are careless about electricity, it can pose a serious threat to you and the safe completion of your project.

Call ahead if you're going to be digging

If your project requires digging, trenching or tilling where there may be buried utility services, call ahead to have the utilities mark their approximate locations.

North Dakota law mandates a call before you dig. They typically require two or three days notice, so plan ahead. Contacts include:

North Dakota: 1-800-795-0555

OR

www.ndonecall.com

Call National: 811



This complimentary brochure can be downloaded from **www.ndarec.com**

NDARECs

North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives

3201 Nygren Dr. NW

Mandan, ND 58554

Phone: 701-663-6501

Fax: 701-663-5745

NDARECs

North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



HOME IMPROVEMENT *and* ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Electricity 101

Electricity always attempts to travel to the ground and will follow the path of least resistance to get there. Tools and equipment you use and even your own body are excellent conductors. Becoming part of the path to ground can damage your equipment and can cause serious personal injury, even death.

When electricity makes contact with the ground, the earth becomes energized for a certain distance around the contact. The strength of the electrical charge decreases as you move away from the point of contact. If it is possible that the ground has become energized, you should move out of the area only by shuffling your feet because there may be a difference in the electrical potential under each foot. This difference could create an electrical path through your body.

Electricity travels at the speed of light, about 186,000 miles per second. At that speed, you don't get a warning. There is no time to react. This is why it is important to respect electricity each and every time you use it or work around it.



When planting, plan now to avoid future hazards

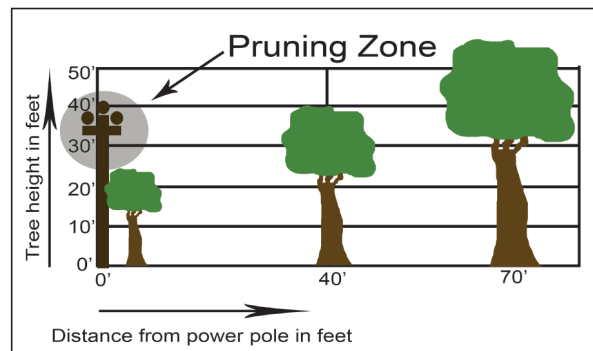
You can avoid pruning bushes and trimming trees near power lines in the future by carefully selecting and placing your landscape plants. Be especially careful not to let ladders or trimmers come in contact with overhead wires.



Consider the size of the mature plant

Planting that tree a little farther away may enable you to work more safely in the future.

A nursery worker can help you select low-growing species that should not grow into overhead power lines.



Treat all power lines as live and dangerous. Never touch a fallen power line or touch anything that is in contact with a line. Stay away, warn others to stay away and immediately report it to the power company.



Sometimes close is TOO CLOSE

It's important to be aware of power line locations when using a ladder, erecting scaffolding or elevated equipment.

Use a clean, dry wood or fiberglass ladder near electric lines. They are less likely to conduct electricity than a metal ladder.

Keep ladders and any type of hoists or cranes at least 10 feet from overhead power lines. Even that distance may be insufficient under certain weather conditions. On a windy day power lines and equipment you are using has a fair amount of sway to it. Use caution and maintain a safe distance (at least 10 feet) from power lines when handling or moving any type of long tool or equipment such as sections of metal pipe.

When installing an antenna, position it at least 1.5 times its total length away from power lines. If it starts to fall during the installation process, let it go and stay clear.

Looks can be deceiving. Overhead power lines are not insulated. What may appear as insulation is weather-proofing material. Wires should not be touched under **ANY** circumstances.