

To Reduce Risk and Liability...

Are electric fences a serious safety risk to humans?

Because touching an electric fence leaves a vivid and painful memory and the voltages are also high, most assume that the risk to life and limb must also be high.

In fact the very opposite is true. Consider that hundreds of thousands of people throughout the world that are “exposed” to the millions of electric fences every day—**yet electric fences account for (but not always the cause of) less than one human death or serious injury per year worldwide.**

Compare that to the number of annual injuries and deaths that occur from human exposure to tractors, skid loaders, ladders, PTO shafts, balers, mowers, combines, bulls, stallions, shotguns, knives, etc.

This is not to suggest that there is no risk. There is a small level of risk. And with risk, there is also liability to the fence’s owner.

To further reduce the risk...

1. Be especially careful **not to touch an energized wire with the head or spine.** For reasons not fully understood, this contact is worse than contact with hands, arms, feet or legs.
2. Never approach a fence without footwear. And wear footwear that fully encloses the foot (not sandals). Why? Footwear is a poor conductor—and so reduces the energy that will pass through your body if you touch it.
3. Use smaller energizers on fences near children and untrained adults. Most experts agree that **smaller energizers are inherently safer than large ones** (as long as animal control is not put at risk).
4. **Use HoriSmart energizers.** It’s inherent in most energizers to increase the energy in the pulse as soon as a human or animal touches the fence. HoriSmart delays this increase for 60 seconds—enough time for the person to move away.
5. **Never connect 2 energizers to one wire** at the same time.
6. **Make the fence as visible as possible to both humans and animals.** How? By using conductors and posts that can be readily seen both day and night, and against both light and dark backgrounds. That’s why Premier has focused for so long on white/black conductors—to provide contrast. Most other fence outlets worldwide now follow our lead.
7. **Never energize barbed wire.** Animals and humans can become entangled and repeatedly shocked.
8. **Hang warning signs** at critical areas where children or untrained adults encounter the fence.
9. **Where practical, do not energize wires less than 12 in. above the soil.** Why? To allow humans who might contact a wire enough space to fall away from any energized wires.
10. Ensure that **all energized wires are on the inside of your boundary fence** (ensuring that anyone who touches them without your permission is a trespasser). For boundary fences, you can achieve this with internal energized offset wires.
11. The shock from electric fences can panic animals that may, in turn, crash into fences (or people), resulting in injury to one or both. Horses have been known to rear and throw their rider—resulting in injuries to both.

To reduce this risk:

- a. **Do not install electrified wire fences to surround feedlots or livestock corrals.**
- b. Reduce the available volts and joules on fences that enclose very small areas (e.g., night enclosures) to lessen animal stress and possible panic.

What NOT to do!



- Never place your head near an electrified wire. Accidental head or neck contact can occur when pushing a voltage probe into the soil or when checking voltage. Be very careful when you do so to avoid head-to-wire contact!
- **Never allow anyone else to touch a modern electric fence. It is not a game!**
- **Instruct all visitors and children to never do so.**

Warning: In 1991 an accidental fatality occurred when a young child’s head contacted an electrified fence while the child was crawling on wet grass. The fence was correctly installed and functioning properly. The energizer was a UL approved unit. As a result, Premier strongly advises against allowing toddlers access to any electrified fences. Also, due to this incident and others, experts now suggest that human contact by an energized wire to the head and neck may be the most dangerous point of contact. We urge all to especially avoid this kind of contact.