To Reduce Risk and Liability...

Are electric fences a serious safety risk to humans?

Because touching an electric fence is painful and the voltages are high, most assume that the risks from an energized fence must also be high.

But that's a myth. Consider that hundreds of thousands of people throughout the world are "exposed" to millions of electric fences every day—***yet they are involved in (but are not always the cause of) less than 1 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, rifles, shotguns, knives, etc.

This is not to suggest that there is no risk at all. There is, indeed, 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. So it 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 usually safer than large ones (as long as animal control is not put at risk).
4. Use HoriSmart energizers. Most energizer designs instantly increase the energy in the pulse as soon as a human or animal touches the fence. HoriSmart units, however, delay this increase for 60 seconds—to allow time for a person or animal 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 long encouraged the use of white/black conductors—to provide contrast. Other fence outlets worldwide are now following our lead.
7. Never energize barbed wire. Animals and humans can become entangled and repeatedly shocked.
8. Hang warning signs *(see below)* at critical areas where children or untrained adults encounter the fence.
9. If it's practical, do not energize wires less than 12" above the soil. Why? To allow humans who might contact an offset wire by falling 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 (e.g. horses) that may, in turn, crash into fences (or people), resulting in injury to one or both.
    To reduce this risk:
    a. Do not install electrified wires on feedlot fences, corral fences or around riding arenas fences.
    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 encourage anyone to touch an electric fence.**

It is not a game nor a sensible practical joke to do so.

What TO do!

- **Instruct all visitors and children to never touch electric fencing.**

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.