Recreation Guidelines
Q. Can I play with a kite or a model plane near a power line?
A. No. Here are some rules to follow:
- Do not fly kites or model planes near any power line.
- Always fly kites and model planes so the wind carries them away from power lines, and television or radio antennas.
- Call your electric utility if a kite or plane becomes snagged in a power line. DO NOT pull the string or climb a tower, pole or ladder to get it down.
- If a plane is caught in the line, let go of the control line immediately and call your electric utility for assistance. DO NOT attempt to retrieve it yourself.

Q. How do you monitor the safety of the line?
A. Xcel Energy follows strict transmission line maintenance standards. We regularly inspect lines by ground (usually during fall or winter months) and by air to look for:
- Non-compatible vegetation within the right of way
- Equipment needing repair or replacement
- Right-of-way encroachments, which can be hazardous to safety and reliable operation
- Anything that might jeopardize safe, reliable operation of the line
Utilities must visit the right of way for these inspections but visits will be minimal and landowners will be contacted prior to inspections or maintenance. However, in cases of emergency, advance contact may not be possible.

Q. Can I build a bonfire, burn leaves or build another type of fire under a power line?
A. No. Fires should not be started under a power line. Smoke and hot gases from fires can create a conductive path for electricity.

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Q. Can I hunt in areas where there is a power line?
A. Hunting is allowed on land where there is a power line, if you are the land owner. Intentionally shooting at power lines is illegal. Shooting insulators or conductors can break a wire or cause hazards such as an electrical discharge or arc through the air.

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Building or planting guidelines

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) requires electric utilities to meet stringent requirements designed to keep our electrical system safe and reliable, including standards for maintaining proper clearances. It is our responsibility to keep a certain amount of distance around power lines clear of anything that may make contact or near-contact with a power line. This includes buildings and incompatible vegetation.

You must call your utility provider before planting any trees, shrubs or building any structures in transmission line rights of way to help avoid problems in the future.

Q. Can I plant anything in the right of way area?
A. No, planting non-compatible vegetation in the border zone or wire zone of a transmission right of way as they will likely require removal.

Q. Can I construct a building or other structure beneath a power line?
A. No, not prior without written approval from the electric utility. Buildings and other structures are generally not permitted on rights of way. It is important that you discuss projects with the utility in order to avoid creating situations that could become unsafe to the landowner and/or utility workers.

Q. Can I irrigate near transmission lines?
A. Yes, as long as you take these precautions:

- Prevent a solid stream of water from hitting the wires. Equipment with nozzles that are small in diameter or spray a fine mist is typically not problematic because the solid part of the water stream will not reach the power line wires. Also, an intermittent spray of water will not conduct significant amounts of electricity. Even large diameter nozzles operating at their normal spray angle typically will not reach the wires with a solid stream. However, if that happens, turn the water off by switching the pump off before trying to correct the problem.
- Make sure the irrigation system is well grounded. If you have questions as to whether or not your irrigation system is adequately grounded, contact your local electric utility.
- Check with utility before installing a new irrigation system. Each system should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis; questions about the installation and operation of an irrigation system should be directed to your electric utility.
- DO NOT install long lengths of pipe parallel and adjacent to transmission lines. They should be laid out at right angles to power lines, if possible, to reduce risk of the pipes building up an induced charge.
- Be careful when moving the pipes. When unloading irrigation pipes, stay at least 50 feet from power lines to avoid any chance of raising them too close to the wires.

Fence Guidelines

Fence wires mounted on wood posts can build up an electrical charge near power lines. Important factors are:

- Length of fence paralleling the line
- Distance between the line and the fence
- Amount of moisture in the fence posts and the ground
- Presence of grounding devices such as metal fence posts or weeds growing next to the fence

Q. What do I need to know about non-electric fences?
A. Non-electric fences made of barbed wire or similar material directly attached to steel posts are adequately grounded and will not collect an electric charge. If you are planning to install a wire fence parallel to and near a power line, use at least one steel post every 150 to 200 feet to ground the fence.

Q. Can electric fences build up an electrical charge?
A. Electric fences, being specially insulated from the ground, can pick up a charge from transmission lines. Usually, the charge will drain off when the charger unit is connected to the fence; however, when the charger is disconnected either for maintenance or when the fence is being built, a small shock may be produced. Contact Xcel Energy for assistance.

Irrigation and watering guidelines

The potential for water and metal to conduct electricity makes it important to take safety precautions when irrigating near power lines. Additionally, fertilizers and pesticides tend to increase the conductivity of water, making extra precautions necessary.

Watering the lawn at your home or business is not problematic; however, you still must prevent a direct, solid stream of water from contacting a transmission line.

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