



Staying safe in electric line rights of way

To ensure your safety during construction and operation of the Big Stone 230-kilovolt lines, Otter Tail Power Company encourages you increase your general electric safety awareness and hazard recognition. This document is designed to provide you with basic safety information and land use restrictions from transmission line rights of way (ROW). Please read it and share the information with children or others unable to read it for themselves.



Otter Tail Power Company designs each of our transmission lines to meet or exceed the appropriate National Electric Safety Code (NESC) clearance distances for operating at specific voltages and load carrying capacities. Electric lines, however, still have the potential to be dangerous during construction and when a facility is damaged by accidents or severe weather. Being aware of these potential hazards and appropriate land use within the ROW will help protect you and everyone around you.

Support structures

Electric line poles, towers, foundations, and anchor cables are typically referred to as support structures. For your safety, never climb or attempt to attach any type of material to the support structures. This restriction includes the attachment of fencing materials, bird or duck houses, and any unauthorized items.

Manufacturers of both wood and steel structures chemically treat their materials to prevent decay from moisture and insect infestation. Contact with these preservative treatments may cause irritation to your skin and other reactions. Unauthorized individuals should not handle these materials.

Like other utilities, Otter Tail Power Company periodically applies follow up chemical treatments to structures. In addition, we may use herbicide treatments in the immediate area around each structure to control the growth of noxious weeds. To prevent contact

with these chemicals, all unauthorized activity within ten feet of any support structure is prohibited.

Conductors

The safety and reliability of a transmission line depends on the integrity of the structures because they support the conductors (wires) carrying power to you and your neighbors' homes and businesses. Human activity on or near structures also should be avoided due to the rare, but ever present, possibility of electrocution during a line-to-structure fault condition.

Electric and magnetic fields

Electric and magnetic fields surrounds each conductor when electricity is flowing through it. These fields are present close to the line. Their intensity dissipates rapidly as the distance from the conductor increases. To help put your exposure to these fields in perspective, consider this:

Your use of an electric shaving razor or hairdryer typically exposes you to stronger electric and magnetic fields than you would be subject to standing under a transmission line.

It is generally safe for you to walk or drive under an electric transmission or distribution line. Extended or long-term activity directly beneath the conductors is not recommended. Don't keep large metallic objects such as vehicles parked or stored directly under electric lines for extended periods of time. Doing so creates the potential for an induced static buildup, which can result in surprising, but typically non-harmful, static discharges when you simultaneously contact the metallic object and the earth.

If you have a medical device such as a heart pacemaker or implanted cardiac defibrillator your physician may recommend that you restrict your proximity to electric and magnetic fields including high-voltage transmission lines. We encourage individuals with these devices or other medical concerns to contact your physician to discuss your specific situation.

Activities under or near the line

You, as the landowner, are permitted to conduct most everyday activities within the ROW, including the area directly beneath the conductors. You should, however, carefully consider any activity that moves an object with the potential ability to come near or in contact with a conductor. Here are a few tips to consider before doing anything below or near an electric line:

- Know how tall your equipment is before driving it under an electric line.
- Equipment more than 14 feet in height should never be operated beneath the conductors.
- Use a spotter if you must raise hydraulic equipment near a line.

- Move equipment that raises and lowers in its lowest possible position when under lines.
- Avoid adding fuel to vehicles under the transmission line. If it is unavoidable, use a non-metallic container and ground the vehicle to eliminate any sparks.
- Never place ladders or lifts close enough to slip or slide into a line.
- Consider the distance an electric line may sway in the wind before getting too close.
- Don't allow children to fly kites, cast fishing lines, or launch rockets and other objects near lines.
- If you are the landowner or have permission from the landowner, hunting within the ROW is allowed. Intentionally shooting at any part of an electric line, however, is illegal and can be dangerous.

You may designate property lines or erect fences to contain livestock within the ROW. No other construction of buildings or other permanent or temporary structures is allowed within the ROW.

Vegetation management

Otter Tail Power Company's mission includes providing safe, reliable, and affordable electricity to you and all our customers. To reduce the number and duration of outages, we carefully control vegetation near our lines by restricting the planting of trees and some climbing plants within the ROW. Common agricultural commodities are permitted to grow, but shelterbelts and windbreaks within the ROW are limited to a list of approved low-growing shrub varieties that will not create a future hazard for the transmission line.

The easements we purchase from landowners for this and other projects prohibit activities that interfere with or endanger the electric line. One such activity is a prescribed burn within the ROW. Such burning often leads to damage or the complete destruction of an electric line structure. Landowners whose actions cause this type of damage will be accountable to pay for the damaged facilities. In addition to structure damage, smoke and soot can alter the insulating properties of the air and cause insulator contamination, resulting in hazardous line-to-structure or line-to-line faults.

Monitoring the safety of the line

Otter Tail Power Company follows strict transmission line maintenance standards. We regularly inspect our lines. Generally we do this from the ground with minimal impact to the land within the ROW. If equipment needs repair or replacement we do our best to contact landowners prior to doing the work. In cases of emergency restoration work, we may not be able to provide advance notice. When property damage occurs as the result of our work, we will contact the landowner to discuss compensation for the damage.