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Farmers reminded to check GPS coordinates after powerline safety incident

Essential Energy is calling for farmers and agricultural workers to ensure they input accurate GPS (Global Positioning System) guidance information when operating machinery, after a recent safety incident where a tractor contacted the electricity network.

General Manager Safety, HR and Environment, David Nardi, said these incidents had the potential to be life threatening, saying: "Agricultural workers and farmers should check the information stored in their GPS guidance systems is correct, before beginning any work."

"The most recent incident involved a tractor which came into contact with an overhead electricity conductor, bringing the powerline and pole down on top of the vehicle.

"Fortunately, the operator realised what happened and followed our emergency response guidelines – staying in the vehicle, contacting Essential Energy immediately and waiting for help to arrive before leaving the tractor," David said.

Essential Energy recommends that agricultural workers also conduct a visual inspection of the area before beginning work to ensure that any hazards are identified.

"Conditions are constantly changing which can make an area unsafe. Storms, wind and vegetation can reduce powerline clearances and dust can obscure visibility, so it's important to check the area before moving machinery," David said.

Powerlines brought down by machinery are not only a threat to operator and public safety, but can also cause inconvenient power outages to nearby residents.

If machinery does contact overhead powerlines, call Essential Energy immediately on **13 20 80**.

For further electrical safety information, visit essentialenergy.com.au/agribusiness.

Media contact: Christie Jarrett, Media Communications Officer
02 6338 3481



Suggested caption: A tractor came into contact with the electricity network recently, bring down a power pole after an error occurred with the GPS guidance system.

Essential Energy is the operator of Australia's largest electricity network spanning 95 per cent of New South Wales' land mass. Owned by the New South Wales Government, Essential Energy also provides water and sewerage services to customers in far western New South Wales.