

Is your electric fence installed correctly?

THE Office of the Technical Regulator, South Australia stresses the importance of electric fences being correctly installed and connected. While the number of human fatalities associated with livestock electric fences is low, it is important for farmers and members of the public to recognise that contact with an electric fence can result in tragedy.

In most cases, such contact results in a relatively harmless shock, and usually the force of the first shock triggers awareness of the electric fence so that contact is broken and other shocks do not follow.

However, there is a risk of serious injury or even death if you receive multiple shocks over a long period (minutes to hours rather than seconds).

Entrapment and being rendered unconscious while in contact with an electric fence are two situations that can cause serious injury or death.

Physical entrapment can occur if you:

- become entangled in the fence (electrified barbed wires pose a higher risk of this and must not be used),
- are trapped between an electric wire and a physical barrier such as a water trough, a building or another part of the fence.

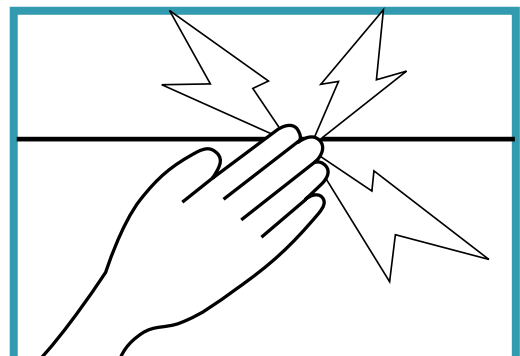
If you have a heart abnormality and/or pacemaker you are more susceptible to being rendered unconscious from contact with an electric fence.

There is an increased risk if your head or neck touches an electrified wire. Climbing through or under an electric fence can increase the danger of a shock to the head.

If you need to get to the other side of a live electric fence you should either climb over it or find away around. Extra care should be taken with those fences near waterways, steep hillsides and cliffs.

It's important that you have adequate warning signs provided where there is public access.

Children, employees and visitors should be made aware of any electric fences installed on your property and the dangers posed by electric fences.



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May 2004

Further information can be found in the Australian Standard AS/NZS 3014:2003 *Electrical installations – Electric fences* which sets out the requirements for constructing, installing and operating electric fences and for connecting them to associated equipment.

The Standard covers electric fences powered by energizers supplied from all types of electric power sources such as batteries, solar cells, diesel or petrol generators and the electricity supply mains.

Appendix A of the Standard, Acceptable Means of Compliance, provides additional information as a means of ensuring your electric fence is installed and operating correctly.

Areas covered in Appendix A include:

- suggestions for minimising hazards to people, animals and property, such as the possibility of a person or animal becoming entangled or entrapped and receiving multiple shocks,
- examples of why barbed wire and razor wire are not to be electrified,
- information on the requirement for safety signs to be installed in certain locations including areas of public access.

If you require information on the correct installation and operation of an electric fence you can either contact your supplier of electric fence products or obtain a copy of Australian Standard AS/NZS 3014:2003 *Electrical installations – Electric fences* from Standards Australia on 1300 654 646.



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