

RUSHING THE JOB CAN BE CATASTROPHIC

When things go wrong, stop and take a minute. Don't rush to 'just get the job done' because that's when accidents are more likely to occur

It's very easy to get frustrated and start rushing jobs to get finished on time. This rush can lead to a lapse of concentration and allows care and safety to go out of the window, which can have devastating results.

Peter Brown, an arable farmer and contractor in Fife, found this out the hard way last year when he and his team were cutting grass silage from some rented ground and they ran into difficulties, with one worker being electrocuted.

"It was our second time being in the field, so we were familiar with it," explained Peter. "It hadn't been a good day for us. We'd had a lot of problems with the forager, we'd had the metal detectors going off because there were old fences lines lying about.

"We knew about the overhead power lines but obviously as things started deteriorating, it was a long day, heads were down, the problems were never-ending and we were just at the stage of giving up."

Peter decided to give it one more go on the other side of the field away from where they believed the buried fence to be.

Unfortunately for Peter and his team, in their haste to get more work done and to salvage the day they forgot about the overhead powerlines which were in the field. As they went to move off, they found the machines caught under the lines.

"The machine shut down manually after that," said Peter. "There were a couple guys on the ground who went to clear the forage. They cleared it and they all moved away, and I fired the machine up and moved again. I'd only moved five yards and the same thing happened again.

"We went through the same routine; shut down the machine and made it safe, but before I knew it there was already someone at the front of the machine. And because there had been a list of problems, he was there a lot quicker than if it had been a normal situation. It looked like he had touched the front of the machine and it was at the point that the machine was in contact with the overhead wires."

The worker on the ground was



electrocuted and thrown backwards, slamming onto the ground a few yards away. All the while Peter was stuck in the forager's cab, completely helpless.

"Thankfully, we soon realised that the

machine was touching the lines above," said Pete. "I was about to climb out, but the worker being thrown backwards stopped me from doing so. That's when I looked up; it looked like the machine was still clear of the cables, but it was actually touching, there was contact made.

"The worker hadn't actually touched the machine though; it was the grass in front of it, which was maybe just as well as it could have been worse.

"I remained in the cab as I couldn't make a clear jump from the cab, and I phoned the emergency services from there."

Thankfully no one was seriously injured following the incident. The worker on the ground regained consciousness by the time the emergency services arrived, and Peter managed to get out of the vehicle safely after waiting for Scottish Power.

Peter is now highlighting the importance of taking a minute and calming down when things are not going well. Rushing a job only causes more problems.

For further information about staying safe when working near power lines, visit <http://www.ssen.co.uk/SafetyLeaflets>

What to do if your machine hits power lines:

- **If contact is made with a power line by a vehicle or machine, stay in the cab and try to drive clear. If that's not possible, stay in the cab, call the power emergency number of 105 and wait for help to arrive.**
- **Only in an emergency, such as the machine catching fire, should you jump clear of the machine. When required to do so, take care not to hold the machine and touch the ground at the same time. Take leaping strides so that one foot is off the floor at all times until you are at least 10 metres away.**