



# Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

Ave M. Bie, Chairperson  
Joseph P. Mettner, Commissioner  
John H. Farrow, Commissioner

610 North Whitney Way  
P.O. Box 7854  
Madison, WI 53707-7854

July 6, 1999

To The Person Addressed:

Re: Farm Wiring Safety Bulletin

The tragic accidental death of Mr. Ed Olson of Friendship, WI from electrocution June 20, 1999, has prompted the Rural Electric Power Services (REPS) program to issue this advisory message. REPS wants to remind all utility stray voltage personnel that there are many farm electrical systems, in this state, with wiring so modified as to pose an immediate risk of serious injury or death to anyone coming in contact with it. When you or your personnel are invited to a farm to investigate possible stray voltage concerns, the priority for testing must emphasize safety as the overriding concern. If the investigator, in his/her personal judgement, deems an electrical system to be unsafe, he/she should inform the customer and vacate the premises until such time as the system has been rendered safe by a qualified electrician. You should offer to work with a qualified electrician on the farm operator's behalf to address your specific concerns about the electrical system. Unsafe electrical systems pose a substantial threat to the farmer, his family, all persons visiting the farm, and the livestock. These unsafe conditions should not be tolerated in an informed and technologically competent society as we have in this state. REPS would like to remind utilities subject to Public Service Commission (PSC) administrative rules that § PSC 113.1322(4) Wis. Admin. Code states:

"A public utility may disconnect commercial or farm utility service, without notice, where a dangerous condition exists for as long as the condition exists."

While REPS does not want to encourage a large number of farm disconnections, the assurance of safety for customers and utility personnel must be paramount. Most farm operators, when informed of the serious nature of the state of their electrical system, will want to modify the deficient wiring immediately. Remind the customer and his electrician/consultant that the National Electric Code (NEC) is a minimum safety standard for the wiring and operation of secondary electrical systems. The REPS must emphasize that the provisions of the NEC and all accepted stray voltage mitigative methods are not mutually exclusive. A farm can be wired so that stray voltage is held to minimum acceptable values and still be wired safely to the specifications of the NEC.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Cook, Electrical Inspector  
Stray Voltage Program Manager  
Rural Electric Power Services

Sincerely,

Richard S. Reines  
Public Service Engineer  
Electric Division

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