

# ELECTRICAL SAFETY ON FARMS VIDEO ROLLED OUT

A new electrical safety video for Irish farmers, which has been produced by the Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee (FSPAC), demonstrates the need for all farmers to check the electrical supply and outputs in their yards and buildings.

This video was developed by members of FSPAC's Buildings, Working at Height Working Group that includes representation from ESB Networks, the Health and Safety Authority, Teagasc, FBD Insurance, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and the construction industry.

Martin Heydon TD, Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine with special responsibility for farm safety, said that video demonstrates the need for all farmers to check the electrical supply and outputs in their yards and buildings.

"Doing so makes the farm safe, not only for them, but all visitors and workers on the farm. I'd urge all farmers to set aside time to check their electrical supplies, look at what improvements may be needed, and use a registered contractor to complete the required updates. Minimise the risks and make sure your farm uses electricity safely."

The video shows a dairy farmer from Co. Westmeath demonstrating the changes he has made and the checks he carries out around electricity to make his farm safer. He congratulated the video collaborators – Farm Safety Partnership, Building and Working at Height Working Group and Westmeath dairy farmer John Stone for "creating an importance resource for farmers".

On launching the safety video, Neale Richmond TD, Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, said that it shows the importance of the collaborative efforts of the FSPAC in creating safety videos and guidance for Irish farmers.

"These efforts are assisting farmers make better decisions keeping them and others safe on their farms. The ESB is an important member of the HSA's Farm Safety Partnership Working Group and play a key advisory role in helping Irish farmers achieve safer ways of working with electricity supply."

## Key learning points on electrical safety on farms:

- All electrical work must be carried out by a registered electrical contractor in accordance with ETCI rules.
- A well-maintained electrical installation on a farm will minimise the risk of an electrical safety incident and avoid breakdowns.
- To prevent electric shock from portable equipment, fit residual current devices (RCDs) on all socket circuits.
- To ensure RCDs work properly, they must be tested at least every 6 months by pressing the test-trip button.
- Faulty electrical installations can result in farm fires.
- 'Stray' electricity can increase mastitis problems on dairy farms.



Ministers Neale Richmond and Martin Heydon with John Coakley on John's farm outside Maynooth, Co. Kildare, following the launch of a new electrical safety video for farmers.

According to ESB Networks, the top seven electrical hazards on farms are fallen electricity wires, wiring installation, portable tools, bonding and stray voltage, electric fences, stand-by generators, machinery and high loads.

Michael Murray, Public Safety Manager at ESB Networks and a member of the Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee, noted that the safety video outlines potential electrical hazards to be aware of around the farm and the key safety checks and tips to help farmers plan ahead and keep their families and livestock safe.

Mark Cullen, Interim CEO of the HSA, stated, "Important work is being carried out by the FSPAC; having guidance and videos showcasing the need to carry out safety updates on farm electrical supplies is crucial. During the period 2013-2022, three farm fatalities involved electricity; these were preventable workplace fatalities.

Those at risk include the farmer and anyone entering the farm who may come into contact with faulty electrical equipment or overhead cables. We ask all farmers to remain diligent and carry out risk assessments on electrical supplies on their farms."

The FSPAC is an advisory committee to the board of the Health and Safety Authority (HSA).