

Coaching Guide 10

Working around electric fencing

Aim: For the new employee to be able to safely work near electric fences, including the location and signage

Electric wires are used on permanent fences and as temporary barriers for short-term animal control and rotational grazing. Animals remember the short, sharp but safe shock that occurs when they touch the fence and develop respect for it. Touching a live electric fence can deliver an uncomfortable shock to humans.

At the end of this coaching session, employees will be able to recall the location of permanent electric fences on-farm, be able to position self safely near an electric fence, recognise the signage of electric fences on-farm and be able to set a temporary electric fence and move through one.

Before coaching starts

Does the employee have prior training, knowledge or experience in electric fencing?

Make sure your farm map has electric fencing clearly marked, so your employee is able to use the map to see where the hazards (electric fences) are located. Where you are using temporary fencing, simply talk the employee through where it is located at the moment and whether there are any regular positions it is moved too.

Have the electric fence diagram in the coaching guide available to assist you in talking with the employee through the hazards of working around electric fences.

Prepare yourself to discuss how an electric fence works

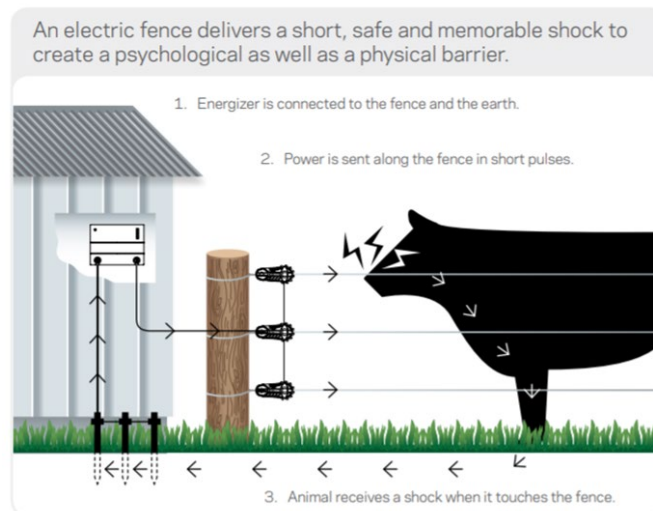
- The mains / battery / solar energizer provides electric pulses about every second. The energizer is 'earthed'.
- Wires on the fence run through insulators. When an animal touches a wire it completes the earth arc and receives a short, sharp jolt. This is memorable enough for it to avoid the fence in the future.
- Temporary fences (and gates) can be set up by tapping into the current in the permanent fence or using a battery. A reel of tape, wire or cord conducts the current and is suspended on movable plastic or insulated posts.

Make sure your employee has access to your electric fencing policies and use it to talk to your new employee about the rules.

Working safely around electric fencing

- ❑ Use your farm map to show where the permanent electrified fences are
- ❑ Describe how an electric fence works using the diagram below. Show the energizer.
- ❑ Walk over to look at a fence and point out the insulators. Show the signage used to mark electric fences. Ask the employee to read the signage and check recognition.
- ❑ Discuss safe distancing and avoiding trip hazards near electric fences – watch where you put your feet! Ask the employee to look around see if they can identify any tripping hazards near the fence.

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Identify electric fences on farm | How do you know if a fence is electrified? |
| Working near electric fences | What is a safe distance to work near an electrified fence? |



Setting up and moving a temporary electric gate or fence

- ❑ Show your new employee the way to open a temporary electric 'gate'. Remind them to watch out for these tapes when using vehicles and moving cows.
- ❑ Point out each of the parts of a temporary electric fence (tape or braided wire, reel, pigtail or plastic posts, insulated grip)
- ❑ Demonstrate each step taken to move the fence, with your employee assisting with clear instructions.
- ❑ The next fence to be moved, ask your new employee to do so and supervise them. Correct any errors and confirm they are safe before allowing them to do on their own.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Hot wire gates | When do we use an electric gate across a laneway? |
| Setting up a temporary electric fence | What are the steps to moving the electric fence? |
| | Show me how to set up a temporary electric fence |
| | Why can you stand on an electric fence tape and not receive a shock? |