

Post No Bills:

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Attaching Signs to Utility Poles Presents Safety Hazards—

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And It's

Illegal

By Chris Grammes

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Although seemingly innocent enough, putting signs or other items on utility poles creates serious safety hazards. Staples, nails, and tacks used to hang signs—as well as the signs themselves—pose dangers to Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative lineworkers who must climb poles when either restoring power following storms or while performing routine maintenance to ensure system reliability.

Posters or other objects (birdhouses, balloons, flags, and even basketball nets) can create dangerous obstacles. Also, the nails and tacks left behind from signs can snag utility workers' boots or puncture safety clothing, making lineworkers vulnerable to slipping or even electrocution.

In addition to being hazardous, tampering with utility poles can be costly. Posting signs or attaching other objects to utility poles is illegal under Virginia Code § 33.1-373 and could result in a \$100 fine for each occurrence.

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Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative encourages co-op consumers to contact local zoning officers to inquire about where signage can be posted legally.

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Chris Grammes writes on safety issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

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