

Barbed Wire

The use of barbed wire has caused many injuries and deaths to its users. Barbed wire was introduced into the West nearly a hundred years ago to lend better control of one's land and livestock. Deaths resulted when range wars ensued between those favoring and opposing its use.

Although barbed wire has been accepted philosophically now, users are still facing injuries when handling and installing the wire.

Barbs have a purpose and, unfortunately at times, they also cause injury to the installer. These are among the precautions which should be adhered to when working with barbed wire:

1. When handling barbed wire, don't be afraid of it, but respect it. Treat it like a loaded firearm; know that it is loaded and handle it accordingly.
2. Always use leather faced gloves when handling barbed wire.
3. Never pick up or handle barbed wire gingerly - grasp it firmly. You may get a prick, but this is better than a torn hand caused by the wire slipping through your fingers.
4. When stretching barbed wire, never straddle or stand directly over the wire. Hold the wire to one side of your body and grasp firmly.
5. Don't wear loose clothing, which might become entangled in the wire.
6. Be careful when laying out wire so as not to kink it. Kinking will cause the wire to break when stretched. We're not as concerned about the broken wire as we are about what happens to you when it breaks and you are standing near it - it will coil fast and wrap you up tighter than a Christmas package.
7. When clipping wire to posts, don't twist it too tight as this may break the wire.
8. Be sure all tools you are using are in good condition.
9. Wear a long sleeve shirt to help protect your arms from the barbs.
10. Be sure everyone on the crew knows the wire is being stretched.
11. Work smart!