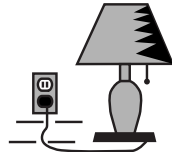




# ELECTRIC AND MAGNETIC FIELDS

It is a fact of life that we all are exposed to electric and magnetic fields. Any device that uses or carries electricity creates electric and magnetic fields, including everyday appliances, lighting and wiring as well as electric power lines and equipment. Electric fields are created by voltage and magnetic fields are created by current. To illustrate, an electric field will be present around a lamp that is plugged in but not turned on. A magnetic field will be created when the switch is flipped and current flows to the device.



OFF: Electric field only.



ON: Electric and magnetic fields.

A considerable amount of research has been done to determine whether electric and magnetic fields (EMF) from power lines adversely affect the health of those living near the lines. The research findings have been inconclusive; there is no direct cause-and-effect link between EMF and any illness.

## STRENGTH OF EMF

Electric and magnetic fields can be measured. EMF emitted from transmission lines falls in the extremely low frequency range of the electromagnetic spectrum. The most powerful fields are produced by gamma rays and x-rays, such as those emitted by a medical x-ray machine. Many variables affect field strength: the amount of current flowing, distance from the wires, and how the wires are placed in relation to one another. Magnetic field levels are measured in milligauss and become weaker with distance, whether from appliances or power lines.

### Typical Magnetic Field Strength of Transmission Lines (milligauss-mG)

Voltage*	Under wires	Edge of right-of-way	At 100 feet
69 kilovolts	20-25	5-10	.5-12
138 kilovolts	35-40	15-20	.5-12
345 kilovolts	85-100	50-60	.5-15

\*Assumes normal current flow

At a distance of 300 feet, magnetic fields are similar to typical background levels found in most homes.

### Typical Magnetic Field Strength of Common Appliances (milligauss-mG)

Appliance	At one foot	Working distance
Microwave oven	17-236	5-28
Electric Range	1.8-3.0	.4-10
Television	3.5-19	.9-10
Hair Dryer	1-700	1-700
Computer Terminal	7-20	7-20
Electric Shaver	-	4-600

(continued on back)

### Electric Substations

In general, the EMF around the outside of a substation comes from the power lines entering and leaving the station. The equipment within the station produces EMF levels that generally drop off to background levels beyond the fence or wall.



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## REGULATORY OVERSIGHT

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) has monitored the EMF issue since 1989 and has established requirements for utilities that propose new electric facilities. Among other things, ATC is required to consider the number of persons and homes along proposed transmission line routes, calculate the field strengths associated with the new line, and look at EMF levels under various line configurations. There are no federal regulations related to EMF levels.

## RESEARCH IS INCONCLUSIVE

The energy industry has also been monitoring developments on this issue for more than 20 years. While studies of EMF have produced little conclusive data, scientists generally agree that the studies taken as a whole show no consistent association between EMF exposure and health risks.

A six-year federally mandated study that concluded in 1999 reported the following findings:

*"The scientific evidence suggesting that [EMF] exposure poses any health risk is weak ... the probability that EMF exposure is truly a health hazard is currently small. The weak epidemiological association and lack of any laboratory support for these associations provide only marginal scientific support that exposure to this agent is causing any degree of harm."* (National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, June 15, 1999)

At ATC, we are committed to protecting the health and safety of the public, and to providing safe, reliable electric service. We will continue to monitor the EMF science and will answer any questions you may have about this issue.

## RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

### Medical College of Wisconsin

[www.mcw.edu/gcrc/cop/powerlines-cancer-FAQ/toc.html](http://www.mcw.edu/gcrc/cop/powerlines-cancer-FAQ/toc.html)

### National Institute of Environmental Sciences, National Institute of Health

[www.niehs.nih.gov](http://www.niehs.nih.gov) and <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/emfrapid/booklet/home.htm>

### Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

<http://psc.wi.gov>

### World Health Organization's International EMF Project

<http://www.who.int/peh-emf/en/>