



**WESTERN
COOPERATIVE
ELECTRIC**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC NEWS

Western's Payment Options



Western's members can make payments through our website or by phone using a credit card or electronic funds transfer.

To pay by phone, call our automated service at 800-330-1025, or call our main office to speak with a Western employee.

Through our website, you can also view your account or enter your meter reading. You will be prompted to set up a login and password the first time you use the online services. You will be asked to enter your base account number and meter number.

Check this and other services at www.westerncoop.com

Staying Safe Around Overhead Power Lines

It can be all too easy to overlook things that we see every day—such as overhead power lines. However, failure to notice high voltage power lines can be a deadly oversight.

“Take the time to examine the area around you,” said Nate Budig, Safety/HR Coordinator for Western. “It is so important not only for yourself but for everybody’s safety.”

Western Cooperative Electric encourages everyone to look up and around you. Follow these guidelines throughout the year:

- ▶ **Always be aware of the location of power lines**, particularly when using long tools like ladders, pool skimmers, and pruning poles. Be sure to lower tall equipment when you are moving it. Carry ladders and other long items horizontally whenever possible.
- ▶ **Be careful when working on or around your roof**—installing antennas and satellite dishes, installing or cleaning gutters, or doing repair work. Never go up on the roof in windy or bad weather.

- ▶ **Be especially careful when working near power lines** attached to your house. Keep equipment and yourself at least 10 feet from lines.
- ▶ **Never trim trees near power lines—leave that to the professionals.** Never use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near electric lines.
- ▶ **Never climb trees near power lines.** Even if the power lines are not touching the tree, they could come into contact when more weight is added to the branch.

To help in identifying and recognizing hazards, Western offers safety demonstrations depicting the situations listed above. The demonstration is a small-scale, three-phase system showing what could happen and possible prevention. Demonstrations are available anytime, free of charge. For more information regarding these safety demonstrations, contact Western's Dennis Deines or Nate Budig at 800-456-6720.

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Be Prepared for Summer Thunderstorms

While a thunderstorm could only be 15 miles in diameter and last around 30 minutes, it pays to keep an ear to the forecast and an eye to the sky to know when one of these potentially devastating storms might blow through your area.

Thunderstorms can produce lightning, flash floods, hail, straight line winds, and tornadoes—all of which can be deadly and lead to property damage.

“Steps you take now can keep you safe during a severe storm,” says Nate Budig, safety director for Western. “Know the difference between a severe thunderstorm watch and warning. A watch means there is the possibility of storms in your area. A warning means a storm has been reported or is imminent and you should take cover.”

The National Weather service offers these tips to make sure you are prepared for summer and summer storms:

- ▶ Assemble supplies for a potential electrical outage.
- ▶ Check the forecast and the hazardous weather outlook.
- ▶ Watch for signs of an approaching storm.
- ▶ If a storm is approaching, turn on a weather radio or an AM/FM radio for information.
- ▶ If a storm is imminent, stay inside until it passes.

If you find yourself outdoors during a storm, remember that if you can hear thunder, you are close enough to be struck by lightning. If possible, get inside or into a hard top vehicle—not a convertible. If safe shelter is not available, find a low spot away from trees, fences, and poles. If you are in-

doors when a storm strikes, stay away from windows and go the lowest level of your home. Unplug unnecessary appliances and do not use corded phones. Cordless and cellular phones are safe.

Once the storm has passed, it does not mean the danger has. Keep yourself and your family safe by being aware of the dangers after the storm.

“DO NOT touch downed power lines or objects in contact with those lines,” Budig cautions. “There is no way to know if that line is energized. A downed power line does not have to be arcing or smoking to be deadly. Stay away from the line and warn others to do the same. If you come across downed power lines, call 9-1-1 and Western immediately.”

The National Weather Service suggests other things to consider after the storm:

- ▶ If you are inspecting your home in the dark, use a flashlight rather than a candle or some other open flame to avoid the risk of fire or explosion due to a gas leak.
- ▶ If you see frayed wiring or sparks or if there is an odor of something burning, shut off the electrical system at the main circuit breaker panel if you know how and can do so safely.
- ▶ If you smell gas or suspect a leak, open windows in the home, if you can do so safely and then get out of the house. If the smell is strong, leave immediately without touching any switches. Once outside, call 9-1-1, and notify your gas utility.

Western wants you to take steps to keep you and your family safe. You can call Western at 785-743-5561 or toll-free 800-456-6720.

Efficiency Tip of the Month

Replacing your conventional power strips with advanced power strips (APS) can help reduce the electricity wasted when electronic devices are idle. These power strips are a convenient and low-cost way to save.

Summer Energy

Efficiency: *Myth vs. Fact*

Myth:

When I'm not home, keeping my air conditioner at a lower temperature throughout the day means it doesn't have to run harder to cool my home when I return.

Fact: To save energy,

set your thermostat to a higher temperature during the day, and lower it when you return home.

Myth: Closing vents on my central air conditioning system will boost efficiency.

Fact: Closing vents can cause the compressor to cycle too frequently and the heat pump to overload. You'll also use more energy.

Myth: Bigger is always better when it comes to cooling equipment.

Fact: Too often, cooling equipment isn't sized properly and leads to higher electric bills. A unit that's too large for your home will not cool evenly and might produce higher humidity indoors.

Myth: Time of day doesn't matter when it comes to running my appliances.

Fact: Time of day does matter when running electrical loads. For example, take advantage of the delay setting and run your dishwasher at night to avoid peak times of use and save energy.



To save energy set your thermostat to a higher temperature during the day and lower it when you return home.