



NINNESCAH RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Watts Ahead

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In Case of an Outage

If your electricity is off for more than a few minutes, please call 800-828-5538. The office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Friday. After hours, calls will be answered by dispatch and forwarded to our on-call personnel.

FROM THE MANAGER

Playing It Safe Online

In today's world, most of us don't leave the front door unlocked. We protect our homes, loved ones and valuables from intruders with locks, alarms and other security measures. Cybersecurity is no different. It's the practice of protecting other valuables such as your identity, banking and health records and other sensitive information from digital attacks and theft.

In addition to pumpkin-spice lattes, crisper air and Halloween festivities, October is the time of year we recognize Cybersecurity Awareness Month. While taking necessary steps to protect our personal information is a year-round practice, at Ninnescah Electric, we use this time to share helpful cybersecurity reminders across our team of employees.

Given our increased reliance on internet-connected devices and gadgets, this month, I'd like to share a few cybersecurity tips and let you know

how Ninnescah Electric is working to boost our own cybersecurity efforts.

According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA), an agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security that is responsible for strengthening cybersecurity and infrastructure protection, these are the four best ways to keep you and your family safe online.

1 IMPLEMENT MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION (ALSO KNOWN AS TWO-STEP VERIFICATION) ON YOUR ACCOUNTS. The additional layer of protection makes it much harder for criminals to access your information. Even if a hacker obtains your password, they may be unable to access your accounts if multi-step verification is enabled.

2 UPDATE YOUR SOFTWARE. This is one of the easiest ways to protect your personal data. When downloading a software update, make sure

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Playing It Safe Online

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it's coming straight from the company that created it. Beware of fake pop-ups that request urgent downloads. Better yet, turn on automatic updates.

3 THINK BEFORE YOU CLICK. Most successful cyberattacks start with a phishing email. Don't take the bait when cybercriminals go phishing. Avoid emails (or texts) that look too good to

be true, oddly urgent, poorly crafted or include unusual requests.

4 CREATE STRONG PASSWORDS, USING LONG, UNIQUE AND COMPLEX WORDS OR PHRASES. Consider using a password manager to save time, work across all devices, protect your identity and notify you of potential phishing websites.

For the Young People in Your Household

Just as you would talk with your children about safety in the physical world, discuss ways to stay safe online. Help them understand the public nature of the internet. Young people need to know early on, that what is shared online stays online and is difficult (if not impossible) to take back. Just as you would guard your money or valuables, children need to learn to guard their personal information, especially on social networks. As a parent or guardian, help your children learn about and

use the privacy and security settings on social networks and gaming sites.

Keeping the Electric Grid and Your Data Secure

We're doing our share on the cyber front. Part of offering excellent service is keeping that service secure and reliable. For Ninnescah Electric, reliability means repairing wear and tear, upgrading our equipment to withstand storms and severe weather and using technology and proven practices to keep our system secure from cybersecurity issues.

We also work together with co-ops across the state in protecting our infrastructure. We learn from each other to keep the grid's network secure. While we can't stop a storm or predict every disruption, as a co-op we do everything we can to keep the lights on and our members protected. Because if we all do our part, our interconnected world will be safer and more secure for everyone.



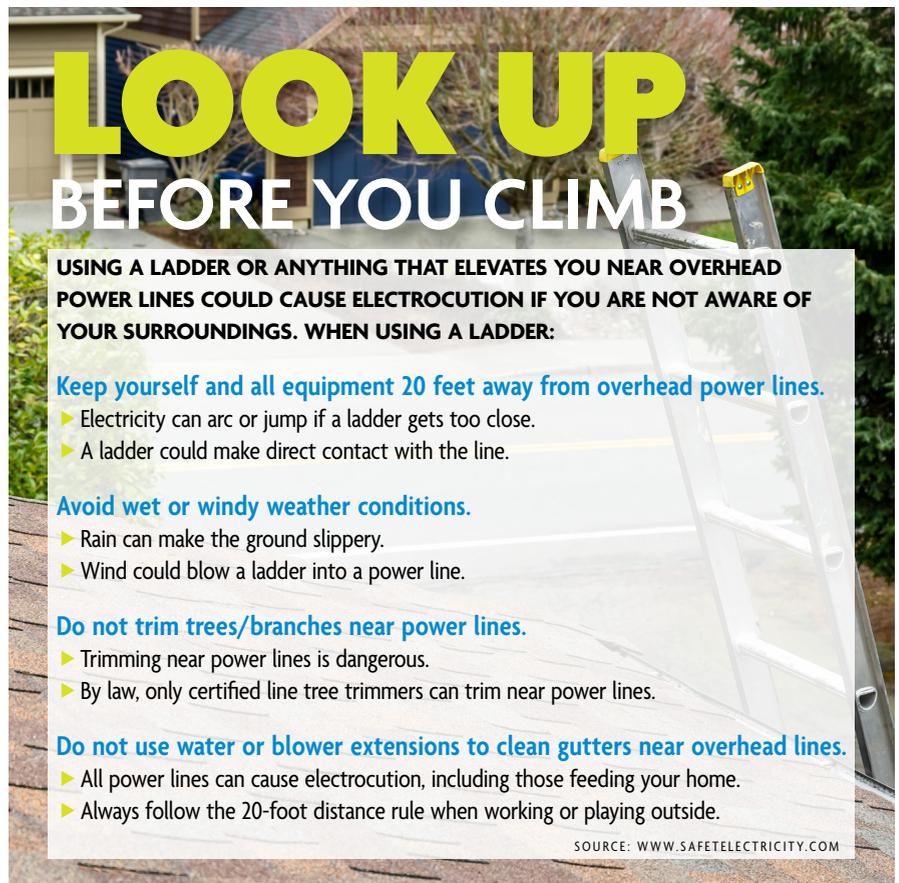
CO-OPS GROW Communities

Electric cooperatives are joining co-ops across the U.S. to celebrate *National Co-op Month* in October.

As your local electric co-op, our services are shaped to meet your specific needs. We love growing with you, the members we are proud to serve.

Welcome New Members

Rhett L &/or Sara Lambert – Lake City
 Kaylie Winkel – Pratt
 Amanda Petz – Preston
 CBVFH LLC – Chester, VA
 Ruth McFarland – Pratt
 PDX Pipeline Co LLC – Stilwell, OK
 Mitchel &/or Shawnda Campbell - Lawrence



LOOK UP BEFORE YOU CLIMB

USING A LADDER OR ANYTHING THAT ELEVATES YOU NEAR OVERHEAD POWER LINES COULD CAUSE ELECTROCUTION IF YOU ARE NOT AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS. WHEN USING A LADDER:

- Keep yourself and all equipment 20 feet away from overhead power lines.**
 - ▶ Electricity can arc or jump if a ladder gets too close.
 - ▶ A ladder could make direct contact with the line.
- Avoid wet or windy weather conditions.**
 - ▶ Rain can make the ground slippery.
 - ▶ Wind could blow a ladder into a power line.
- Do not trim trees/branches near power lines.**
 - ▶ Trimming near power lines is dangerous.
 - ▶ By law, only certified line tree trimmers can trim near power lines.
- Do not use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near overhead lines.**
 - ▶ All power lines can cause electrocution, including those feeding your home.
 - ▶ Always follow the 20-foot distance rule when working or playing outside.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFETELECTRICITY.COM

SMART Breaker Boxes

Every home has an electrical panel, otherwise known as a breaker box. The design hasn't changed much over the years, but through recent innovation, the smart technology-enabled electrical panel is changing that.

Smart breaker boxes, which can operate on their own or in conjunction with a standard electrical panel, make them an excellent alternative for households looking to save energy.

Consumers are upgrading to smart breaker boxes to make their home electrical systems safer and more reliable. It's recommended to hire a qualified electrician to install the smart panel, which can be done using a home's existing electrical wiring and infrastructure.

Smart breaker boxes are designed to easily connect to other smart devices in your home. With the capacity to remotely monitor and adjust energy

consumption, these devices provide several advantages that make them a worthwhile investment for anyone looking to consume less energy.

One advantage smart breaker boxes provide is convenience for homeowners to monitor and control how much energy they use. With smart circuit breakers, you can receive real-time data that allows you to pinpoint appliances or devices that consume excessive energy. This real-time tracking allows consumers to adjust their energy use where needed, which ultimately saves money on monthly energy bills, reduces energy waste and is good for the electric grid.

Smart breaker boxes are all about managing your electrical load. While the technology to track how much energy a home uses has been available for years, the ability to control how that energy is used is new. A smart breaker box can reveal how much power each circuit is using and turn each one on or off. Some smart breaker boxes allow you to establish schedules based on importance, such as refrigeration and heat to be on 24/7, but less important loads like Wi-Fi or the television to turn off during scheduled times.

Smart breaker boxes offer additional benefits for those with home solar systems. Smart breaker boxes help solar energy systems run more efficiently by determining how much energy is being used and how it can be stored. Through intelligent load management, they can provide longer battery backup life for those with energy storage. Additionally, integration with other smart home devices, like thermostats and virtual assistants, further enhances the connected-home ecosystem.

Safety in electrical devices is highly important to consumers, and smart breaker boxes provide enhanced safety features that consumers appreciate. Smart breaker boxes can identify abnormalities and other potential



Smart breaker boxes, like the hardware-agnostic Lumin Smart Panel shown here, turn standard panels into smart panels by providing comprehensive energy control and extending whole-home backup.

electrical problems, then quickly shut off power supply if a circuit shorts or becomes overloaded, avoiding electrical fires and other dangers. Many smart breaker boxes include surge protection to help protect against power spikes and other issues.

Smart breaker boxes aren't just for consumers — electric utilities are using them too.

For electric co-ops, smart breaker boxes also offer a range of benefits. A primary advantage of these devices is that they allow for more efficient and reliable energy distribution. With the ability to remotely monitor energy use and detect faults within the system, electric co-ops can quickly respond to issues and minimize outage times for consumers — ultimately managing the grid more efficiently.

There's no denying that smart home technologies have changed how we use our homes, and smart breaker boxes are no exception. Smart breaker boxes help both customers and electric utilities in multiple ways. With advanced safety features, real-time energy tracking and control, and the ability to use energy more efficiently, these devices are a smart investment for anyone who wants to make their home's system more reliable, safer and cost-effective.



With smart breaker boxes, like the SPAN Panel shown here, you can control and monitor every circuit in your home from a smartphone or tablet.

Share Information That Saves Lives

National Teen Driver Safety Week is Oct. 15-21

Eight people die in distracted-related crashes on American roads each day, according to the National Safety Council (NSC). National Teen Driver Safety Week is observed the third week of each October, which is a good time to talk to the teens in your life about safety on the open road, including the hazards of distracted driving and downed power lines.

Distracted Driving

There were 3,522 people killed by distracted driving in 2021*, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Lead by example and, as the NSC touts, “just drive.”

Texting while driving is the most alarming distraction behind the wheel, since sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for approximately 5 seconds. Other distractions include sifting through music, checking social media, using navigation, eating, talking on the phone, taking selfies, drinking a beverage or using an app.

Distracted driving is preventable. Teens and adults alike can follow these five easy tips to help them concentrate on just driving:

1. That text can wait. Do not text while driving.
2. Make responding less tempting by blocking texts while behind the wheel. LifeSaver is one of many apps that activates to block text notifications and disables certain phone features while the car is in motion.
3. Do not eat while you drive.
4. Rely on playlists instead of searching for music.
5. Set up navigation before you leave or have a passenger navigate.

Downed Power Lines

Although no one wants to think about teens being in car accidents, it does happen. Severe storms can damage utility equipment, such as power lines/poles and pad-mounted transformers (green boxes). Have discussions with teens about what to do if there is a downed power line or damaged equipment.

Here is how the ground or objects can become energized without any visual indication:

- ▶ The energy spreads like ripples on a pond.
- ▶ If you walk or run from one voltage

“ripple” to another, your feet experience a difference in voltage (this is called step potential).

- ▶ If you touch something at one voltage and step on or touch something at a different voltage, your hands (or your hand and foot) experience a difference in voltage (called touch potential).
- ▶ Your body becomes electricity’s path to ground when electrical current enters your body at one point and exits at another.

What to Do

If you are in a car accident, stay inside your vehicle, call 911 and report that there is damaged electric utility equipment. If you are a bystander, do not approach the scene to help. Stay at least 50 feet away and do not lean on or touch anything.

Downed lines or other damaged utility equipment can look lifeless and harmless and still be live. Downed lines and other damaged electrical apparatuses do not have to be sparking, moving, sizzling or giving off flames to be energized.

Learn other electrical safety tips at www.SafeElectricity.org.

*2022 STATISTICS NOT AVAILABLE AS OF THE WRITING OF THIS ARTICLE.

