

# JAMUP

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

## Tips to make improvements before cold weather arrives

At times, temperatures this past summer were almost unbearable. As a result, you may have noticed an increase in your electricity bill. As we enter fall, there should be some relief and electricity bills should fall. With winter a few months away, now is the time to prepare for it. If you wait until cold weather hits to think about energy efficiency improvements, you have waited too long. Here are some things to think about to lower your energy usage.



- 1) Keep the cold air out and the warm air in. Caulk and weatherstrip around windows and doors to eliminate air leaks. Seal gaps in floors, walls, around pipes and electrical wiring. Install gaskets behind outlet covers and make sure you have enough insulation in your attic. For those of you residing in a mobile home, adding underpinning or repairing gaping holes or tears in existing metal may be quite beneficial.
- 2) Check or replace your HVAC system. Change your filters regularly. When you install new filters, make sure they are facing in the correct direction. **Robin Monan** Fix broken ducts by replacing cracked or peeling tape for a tight seal. If your heating system is over 15 years old, consider a replacement unit. The federal government allows for a 30 percent Federal Tax Credit for geothermal heat pump installation. The cooperative offers a \$400 rebate to the member and a \$200 rebate to the contractor installing the system.
- 3) Install a programmable thermostat. Setting a thermostat a few degrees lower at nighttime and making proper thermostat adjustments while you're away from home for long periods of time can significantly lower your electric bill. Every degree you lower can take up to two percent off your bill. Smart thermostats can now be accessed over the internet.

- 4) Make minor lifestyle changes. During the day, let the sunshine in. Open your shades and drapes and let the sun heat your home. When the sun sets, close them to retain the heat. Turn off lights and electronics in rooms that you are not using. Unplug that spare refrigerator in your garage that has nothing in it. Visit our website [www.siec.coop](http://www.siec.coop) and sign up for SmartHub. Here you can view your daily usage.
- 5) Minimize the usage of electric space heaters. First, there is no miracle heater. Most electric space heaters are 1,500 watts. They will use the same amount of electricity as any other 1,500-watt space heater regardless of the price you paid. They produce enough energy to heat a small room in your house. Below is an approximate breakdown of energy charges if the heater runs 24 hours a day in a 30-day billing cycle.

$$\begin{aligned}
 &1,500 \text{ watts} \times 24 \text{ hours} = \\
 &36,000 \text{ watts}/1000 = \\
 &36 \text{ kilowatt-hours (kWh)} \\
 \\
 &36 \text{ kWh} \times 30 \text{ days} = \\
 &1,080 \text{ kWh} \times \$0.12 \text{ average cost per kWh} \\
 &= \$129.60
 \end{aligned}$$



On November 3, daylight saving time ends. While you are changing your clocks, do not forget to change the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.

## Don't wait. Be prepared before the storm.

It's your worst-case scenario. A major storm was predicted and this time, the predictions were right. Many power lines are down, and your electricity may be out for several days. You are low on everything—food, pet supplies, toilet paper, batteries, diapers and medication.

*Jenna Blessing*

Imagine how you would feel in this situation. While you can't predict which weather forecast will come true, you can plan ahead so when a severe weather event strikes, you have the tools and resources to effectively weather the storm. The Department of Homeland Security offers several resources to help you prepare for major weather events and natural disasters. Visit [www.ready.gov/make-a-plan](http://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan).

### Preparedness Actions and Items

- Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of non-perishable food, such as canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk, instant coffee, water and other essentials (i.e., diapers and toiletries).
- Confirm that you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies including towelettes, soap and hand sanitizer.
- Ensure your First Aid kit is stocked with pain relievers, bandages and other medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.
- Set aside basic household items you will need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener and portable, battery-powered radio or TV.
- Organize emergency supplies so they are together in an easily accessible location.

### With advance warning

If a severe storm such as a hurricane is expected with high winds and sustained rain, you may need to take extra steps to safeguard your home. Shutter windows and securely close exterior doors. Fully charge all cell phones, laptops and devices so you have maximum power in the event of a power outage. If you plan to use a small generator, make sure it's rated to handle the amount of power you will need,

yet produces considerable light. Solar lights also work, if they can receive some sunlight during the day for charging.

During thunderstorms, the American Red Cross recommends avoiding electrical equipment and land-based telephones. Use battery-powered TVs and radios instead and keep away from windows.

After the storm, avoid downed power lines and walking through



and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely.

### During a prolonged outage

In the event of an outage, turn off appliances, TVs, computers and other sensitive electronics. This will help avert damage from a power surge and will also help prevent overloading the circuits during power restoration. That said, do leave one light on so you will know when power is restored. If utilizing a small household generator, consider using LED holiday lights to illuminate a living area. A strand of 100 white lights draws little energy

flooded areas where power lines could be submerged. Allow ample room for utility crews to safely perform their jobs – including on your property.

### Power in planning

Advance planning for severe storms or other emergencies can reduce stress and anxiety caused by the weather event and can lessen the impact of the storm's effects. Sign up for NOAA Weather Radio emergency alerts and warnings to stay abreast of important news and information. Act today, because there is power in planning.

## Farmers: Remember electrical safety this harvest season

In 2017, farmers ranked eighth in the list of the most dangerous jobs (civilian jobs with highest fatality rates) according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics/U.S. Dept. of Labor. Unfortunately, farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural managers rank right below other hazardous jobs such as logging, roofing, and steel work.

It is no wonder farmers make that list. As agriculturists are well-aware, many dangers are present in their long and arduous workdays.

**Safe Electricity** and **Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative** remind farmers that accidents related to power and electricity are also possible but in most cases, they can be prevented. Especially during the busy harvest season, take the following steps to decrease the chances of an electrical-related incident:

- Always use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines.
- Use care when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines — at all times, in all directions.
- Inspect the height of the farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, call us right away. *Kristi D. Fox*
- If your equipment does hit a power line, do not leave the cab. Immediately call 9-1-1, warn others to stay away, and wait for the utility crew to cut the power.

Although harvest season is a time filled with tight deadlines and heightened work stress, take the time to consider electrical safety. It could save your life or the lives of others.

For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

## HARVEST SAFETY TIPS FOR FARMWORKERS

**Maintain a 10-foot clearance** around all utility equipment in all directions.

**Use a spotter and deployed flags** to maintain safe distances from power lines and other equipment when doing field work.

**If your equipment makes contact with an energized or downed power line, contact us immediately** by phone and remain inside the vehicle until the power line is de-energized. In case of smoke or fire, exit the cab by making a solid jump out of the cab, without touching it at the same time, and hop away to safety.

**Consider equipment and cargo extensions of your vehicle.** Lumber, hay, tree limbs, irrigation pipe and even bulk materials can conduct electricity, so keep them out of contact with electrical equipment.

*Source: Safe Electricity*

## Member prize

In this issue of the JAMUP, we printed the names of three SIEC members who are eligible to receive a \$10 credit toward their utility bill. If you find your name printed in this center section and it's not part of the story, call Bree with your account number at **800-762-1400** to claim your prize.

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# BABy proofing

How does your home stack up?



Learn more at [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org)

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

**Cookware Tip:** Copper-bottomed pans heat faster on the stove. In the oven, ceramic and glass dishes are better than metal. With ceramic and glass dishes, you can turn the oven down about 25 degrees, and your meal will cook just as quickly.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

