

Planning a yard project? Don't just dig in

It's the time of year we love to get outside and spend time in our yards. Here's a friendly reminder that as we begin beautifying our surroundings, we shouldn't just dig in. According to 811, the "Call Before You Dig" national hotline, an underground utility is damaged every nine minutes because someone didn't call before digging.

Whether it is a do-it-yourself project or you are hiring a professional, call 811 two to three days prior to starting any digging project to request that all underground utilities be marked. The service is free.

You may think it won't hurt anything to dig in an unmarked yard when landscaping, installing a fence, deck or mailbox, or even

just planting a small flower bed or bush, but damaging an underground cable can have serious consequences.

Hitting a line could result in serious injuries and disrupted service for you and your neighbors. It could also make a dent in your wallet for repair fees or other fines. The 811 hotline points out that there is more than one football field's length of buried utilities for every man, woman and child in the U.S. Before digging:

- **Notify** the one-call center by calling 811 or making an online request 2-3 days before work begins.
- **Wait** the required amount of time for affected utility operators to respond to your request.
- **Confirm** that all affected utility

operators have responded to your request and marked underground utilities.

- **Dig Carefully** around the marks with care. **3613-48**

Remember that **privately owned underground lines** will NOT be marked by location flaggers. Examples of private lines/equipment include well and septic, underground sprinkler systems, invisible fencing, gas or electric lines that serve a detached building, as well as any lines (electric, water, sewer) from the meter to your home.

For more information about safe digging, contact the WIEC office at 217-357-3125 or 800-576-3125. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

5 STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING

Working on an outdoor project? Always call 8-1-1 first, because you never know what's below. Here are five easy steps for safe digging:

Source: call811.com

1. NOTIFY

Call 8-1-1 or make a request online two to three days before you start.



illinois1call.com

2. WAIT

Wait two to three days for a response to your request. Affected utilities will send a locator to mark any underground utility lines.



3. CONFIRM

Confirm that all affected utilities have responded by comparing the markers to the list of utilities the 8-1-1 call center notified.



4. RESPECT

Respect the markers provided by the affected utilities. They are your guide for the duration of your project.



5. DIG CAREFULLY

If you can't avoid digging near the markers (within 18-24 inches on all sides, depending on state laws), consider moving your project.





Western Illinois
ELECTRICAL COOP.
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

524 North Madison | P.O. Box 338
Carthage, IL 62321
www.wiec.net | 800/576-3125

OFFICE HOURS

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Monday - Friday

BUSINESS OFFICE

217-357-3125

TO REPORT AN OUTAGE

800-576-3125

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- **Kent Flesner** —
President, West Point
- **Mark Burling** —
Vice President, Carthage
- **Janet Spory** —
Secretary/Treasurer, Sutter
- **William Newton** —
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer,
Burnside
- **Rob Gronewold** —
Director, Carthage
- **Kim Gullberg** —
Director, Stronghurst
- **Jay Morrison** —
Director, Niota

STAFF

- **Todd Grotts** — General Manager
- **Ryan Biery** — Manager
of Operations
- **Wendi Whitaker** — Finance and
Accounting Manager

MAP LOCATION CONTEST

Every month we are printing four members' map location numbers in the newsletter. If you find your map location number call the WIEC office by the 25th of the following month, tell us where it is and we will give you a \$10.00 bill credit. Keep on reading the WIEC News.

ELECTRICAL Safety

for
Teens



DO NOT use generic chargers or cords.
They could **overheat** or shock or burn you.



DO NOT put
your cell phone **under**
your pillow or take it
to bed with you.



DO NOT use charging
cell phones or other
electrical devices **with wet**
or damp hands.



DO NOT bring a charging cell phone or other
electrical devices **near water**, including a
bathtub or pool.



If you are in a car accident involving a downed
power line, **DO NOT** get out of the vehicle
unless you see smoke or fire.

**If you must exit a burning
vehicle** near or on a downed
power line, make a **clean**
exit from the car and
land on both feet; then
hop with feet together,
DO NOT WALK,
to safety.

Safe
Electricity.org



What your teen should know about electrical safety

Parents of teens can relate. You want to share important information with your teen but he or she braces for the next lecture. Your teen may give you the quintessential eye roll but sharing this safety information could help save his or her life. So, when the time is right, relay this information to your teenager to prevent electrical shock.

At home

Do not use a cell phone near the bathtub or sink or with wet hands while it is plugged in and charging. Do not use an extension cord in the bathroom to extend your phone's reach closer to the tub. Teens have died after a charging phone dropped into bath water.

Do not sleep with your charging cell phone under your pillow or in bed with you. The phone can overheat, causing bedding to catch on fire or burn skin. Also, a short in the charging cord can cause electrical shock when using your phone. This is especially a risk when using generic or incompatible charging equipment. Always replace charging equipment with brand name/matching items. They cost more, but they are less likely to malfunction.

Do not charge your cell phone, tablet or other devices on soft surfaces such as a blanket, pillow or bed-ding. **8531-40**

On the road

- If you are in an accident involving a downed power line or damaged padmount transformer or other electrical equipment, call 9-1-1

and **DO NOT** get out of your car. Only get out if there is smoke or your car is on fire. If that's the case, make a clean exit from the vehicle (make a solid jump out without touching the car) and hop with feet together as far as you can. **DO NOT WALK.** If there is damaged power equipment, the ground and anything else the lines touch could have electrical current running through it.

- If you approach an accident with a downed power line, **DO NOT** attempt to help the victims and do not go near the scene. Instead, call 9-1-1 and warn others not to approach the area.

Outside

- **Do not** use plugged in devices (e.g. a charging cell phone) near water like a pool or hot tub or in damp conditions.
- If you are swimming in a lake and feel odd sensations in your body, such as tingling or zaps, swim away from the dock or other source of electricity (e.g. lights). Sometimes electrical currents can leak into the water and can cause electric shock drowning. If you feel odd sensations in a wading pool, hot tub or swimming pool, get out.

Although you may not be able to cover all these tips with your teen in just one sitting, they are important to convey and could prevent injuries and save lives. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



Wood chips! Get your wood chips here!

Western Illinois Electrical Coop. has hired a tree crew. This means we will have wood chips available to members at various times throughout the year. If interested, please contact the office to make arrangements. **8613-56-1**



Welcome New Members

Blint, Rebecca
Brackenbury, Terry
Bunn, Jacklyn
Dearwester Grain Services, Inc
Flesner, Erik D. & Carrie J.
Kirby, Kyle
Krawchuk, Jennifer
Metternich, David J.
Nelson, JeAnne & Andrew
Persinger, Sean M.

February
2020

Trimming trees near power lines can kill

There's no other way to say it. Trimming branches or limbs near power lines can kill. **3613-48**

If you look the other way, get distracted by deciding which limb to trim next or lose your footing, you could inadvertently make contact with a power line. You might think you have a steady hand, but moving a few inches off course could be the last thing you ever do.

It doesn't take contact with a wire to cause a fatal shock — electricity will jump to find the quickest path to the ground. Keep yourself and your tools or equipment more than 10 feet away from lines.

Did you know trimming within 10 feet (in any direction) of a power line is illegal? Only OSHA-certified line clearance workers are authorized to trim near power lines. So when hiring a tree trimmer to trim near power lines in your yard or on your property, make sure the person you hire is certified to do so.

Call us with any questions about trees and power lines at 217-357-3125 or 800-576-3125. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



Remember: Trimming trees within 10 feet of a power line can be fatal. Never trim branches or limbs near a power line. It's the law: only OSHA-certified line clearance workers are authorized to trim near power lines.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When the weather is nice, put your grill to use! During summer months, cooking outdoors is a great way to save energy and eliminate unwanted heat from cooking indoors.

2020 Operating Budget

Upon request, copies of the Western Illinois Electrical Coop. operating budget for 2020 will be available at the office during regular business hours starting in January.

WHAT SHIMMERS And Shines

Use **SUMMER OUTDOOR LIGHTING** Safely

- Only use lighting approved for outdoor use.
- Make sure lighting has a reputable seal of approval, such as UL.
- Use outdoor-rated bulbs.
- Use recommended bulb wattage.
- Inspect all cords and lights for damage or wear before using them.
- Only use outdoor-rated extension cords and do not overload them.
- Do not use nails or metal tacks to hang light strands.
- Make sure your outlets are GFCI-protected.

For more information: SafeElectricity.org