SPOON RIVER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

NEWS

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President's Report

William R. Dodds
President/CEO

We're ready for storm season. Are you?

Summer is in full swing, and I welcome more opportunities to be outdoors and enjoy the warm weather. Summertime brings many of my favorite activities like cooking out with family and friends, afternoons on the water and simply slowing down a bit to enjoy life.

But summer months also make conditions right for dangerous storms. These potential weather events can cause destruction to our electrical system, but I want you to know that Spoon River Electric crews are ready and standing by to respond should power outages occur in our area.

When major storms knock out power, our line crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed lines. I would encourage you to also practice safety and preparedness to protect your family during major storms and outages.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends the items below as a starting point for storm and disaster preparedness, but visit www.ready.gov for additional resources.

- Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of non-perishable food, such as canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk, water and other essentials.
- Have 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 easily accessible in one location.

In the event of a prolonged power outage, turn off major 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, leave one light on so you will know when power is restored. If you plan to use a small generator, make sure it's rated to handle the amount of power you will need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely.

Listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for storm and emergency information. After the storm, avoid downed power lines and walking through flooded areas where power lines could be submerged. Allow ample room for utility crews to safely perform their jobs, including on your property.

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 emergency alerts and warnings.

I hope we don't experience severe storms this summer, but we can never predict Mother Nature's plans. At Spoon River Electric, we recommend you act today because there is power in planning. From our co-op family to yours, we hope you have a safe and wonderful summer.

Spoon River Electric Cooperative

930 South Fifth Ave, PO Box 340,
Canton, IL 61520
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
309-647-2700 • www.srecoop.org

Spoon River Electric Cooperative – By the Numbers

Miles of line energized: 1,272

Number of members served: 5,022

Number of power poles in territory: 29,361

SWIMMING POOL ELECTRICAL SAFETY CROSSWORD

Energy Explorers

Water and electricity never mix! When you're cooling off in the swimming pool, remember to practice electrical safety. Complete the pool safety crossword puzzle below.

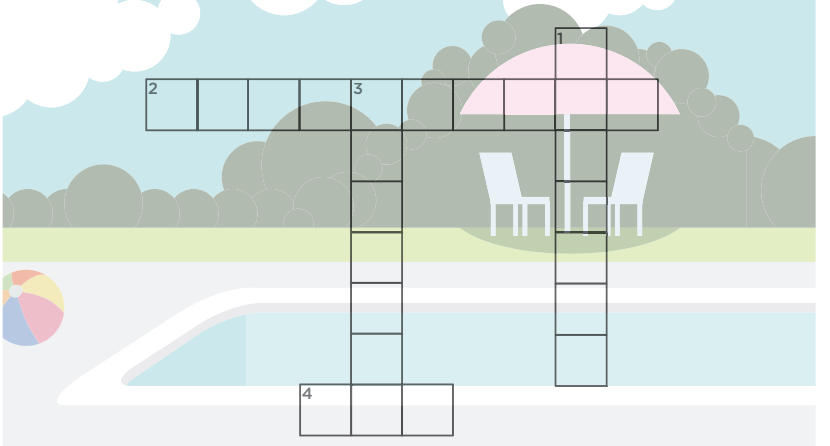
Hint: Check your answers in the key below.

1 Down:
When possible, use _____ operated devices when outside near a swimming pool.

2 Across:
Never bring _____ devices near a swimming pool. If they come in contact with water, electric shock could occur. Devices should be kept at least 10 feet away from water sources.

3 Down:
If you hear _____, immediately exit the swimming pool. Storms may be near.

4 Across:
All outdoor electrical outlets should be covered to keep them _____.



Answer Key – 1 Down: battery 2 Across: electrical 3 Down: thunder 4 Across: Dry

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

A dirty filter causes your air conditioner to work harder than necessary. Remember to change your air filter every month (or every two months) to prevent dust buildup, which can lead to even bigger problems.

Source: www.energy.gov

Take cover when a storm is brewing

Sometimes a storm pops up or changes direction without any warning, while other times it is forecast days in advance and follows its predicted course. In either case, knowing what to do right before, during and after a storm can help to keep you safe.

When a storm hits

When stormy winds blow, follow these weather-related reminders from FEMA and the Red Cross:

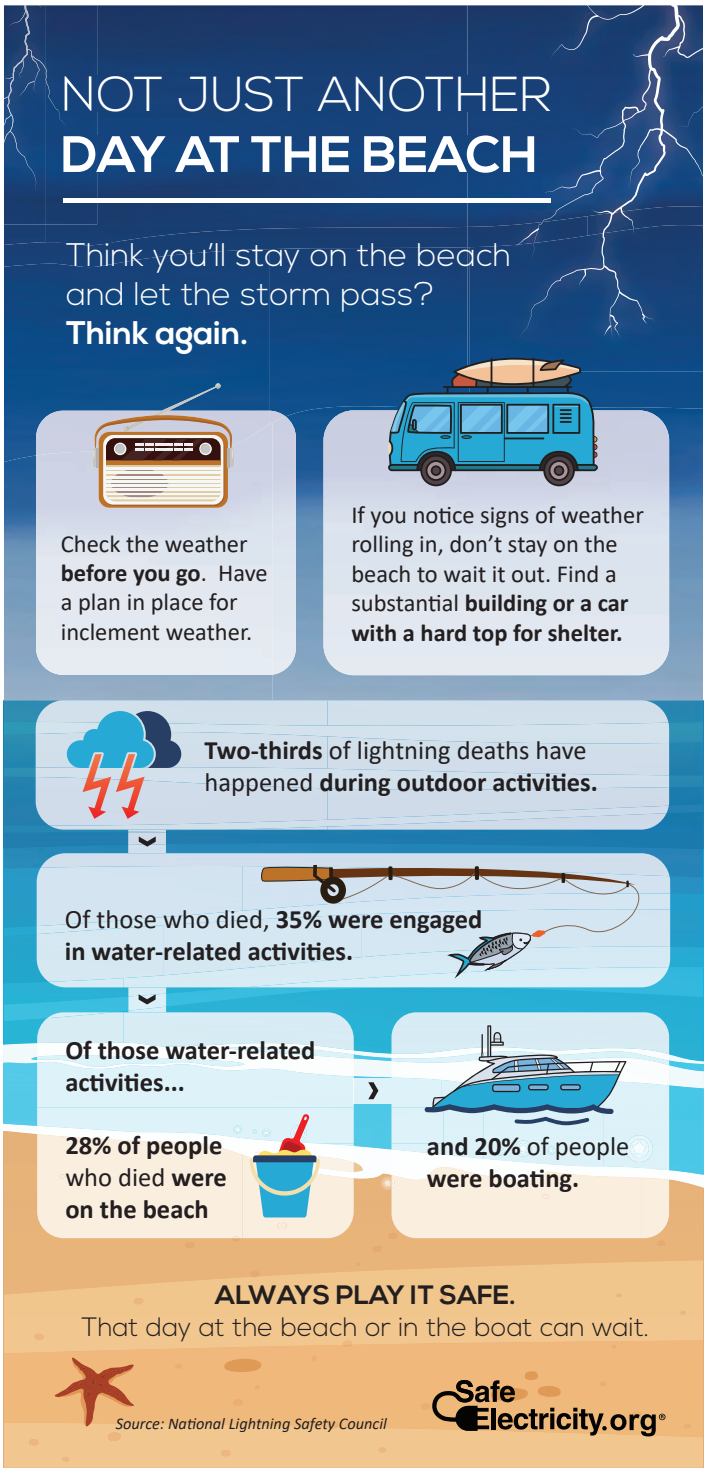
- Never seek shelter under an isolated tree, tower or utility pole, since lightning tends to strike tall objects.
- Immediately vacate elevated areas such as hills, mountain ridges and peaks.
- Get away from ponds, lakes and other bodies of water.
- Stay away from objects that conduct electricity, including wires and fences.
- Never lie flat on the ground.
- Pick a safe place in your home, away from windows and doors, for family members to gather during a thunderstorm.
- Know the difference between a watch and a warning for extreme weather such as a tornado or severe thunderstorm. A watch means that the weather is possible in and near the area. A warning means that severe weather has been reported by spotters or indicated by radar. A warning is more serious than a watch and means there is imminent danger to life and property.

After the storm

Once the storm is over, follow these safety tips from Safe Electricity:

- Never step into a flooded basement or other standing water. The water could be covering electrical outlets, appliances or cords. Never touch (or use) electrical appliances, cords, wires or switches while you are wet or standing in water.
- After a storm, a downed power line could be covered by standing water or debris. Never go near a downed line and warn others to stay away. If you see a downed line, call 9-1-1, and a crew will be dispatched to de-energize the power and address the problem safely.
- The same safety know-how applies to a downed power line you might encounter while driving or after an auto accident. In either case, do not get out. Instead, call 9-1-1 to report the downed line (pull over first if you are driving). If you must exit your vehicle after an accident because of a fire or smoke, make a solid, clean jump out, landing with both feet together. Then make solid hops with your feet together, hopping as far away as you can.
- If your home has been damaged by a flood, turn off the power to your house if it is safe to do so. Do not turn power off at the breaker box while standing in water or in damp conditions.
- If the wiring, electrical system or appliances have been damaged by water, have your home inspected by an electrician; also, have appliances serviced by a qualified technician before using them.

For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



Brownouts: What are they, and why do they happen?

The lights flicker and dim. The television suddenly reboots. Your computer screen goes dark. As soon as you start to wonder when or if you clicked save, the lights become brighter and everything seems to return to normal; except, perhaps, that document you were working on.

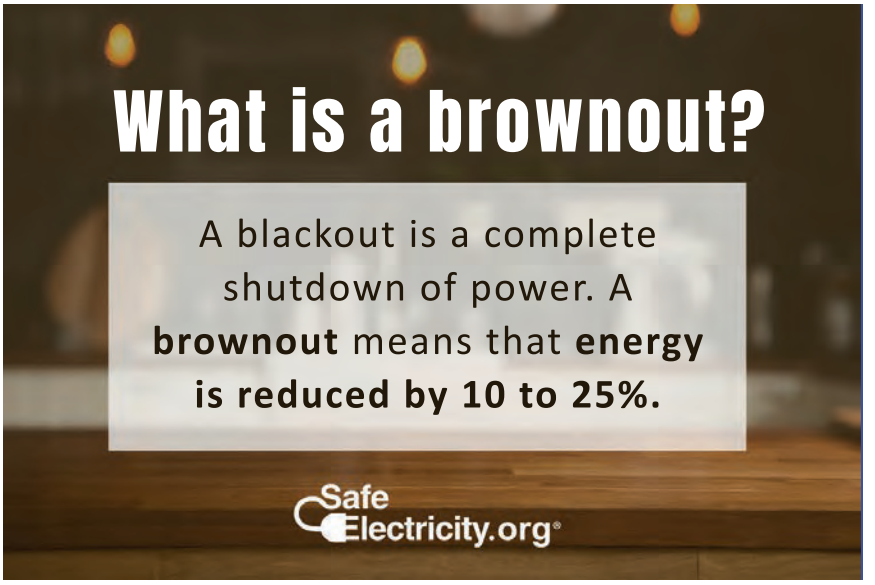
When these events occur simultaneously, it could mean that you have experienced a brownout, which gets its name from the way incandescent light bulbs dim and the light appears brown. But what exactly is a brownout, and how is it different from a blackout?

Where a blackout is a complete shutdown of power, a brownout means energy is reduced by 10 to 25 percent. Brownouts typically occur when outdoor temperatures are extreme, causing a significant spike in energy demand. This heightened demand can cause electricity production to be near or at capacity. The opposite action, a temporary reduction in the voltage of electricity (a brownout), can help avoid a total shutdown of the electrical system.

When energy demand is at its highest, Spoon River Electric and Safe Electricity recommend:

- Unplugging computers and high-end electronics to protect them from potential damage caused by power sags and surges. As a rule, these types of devices cannot regulate the amount of power they receive.
- Installing point-of-use surge protectors. This type of affordable surge protector plugs directly into an outlet and works by cutting the power when excessive voltage is detected. While most appliances are typically unscathed by dips and eventual surges in voltage levels caused by a brownout, damage can happen, and these devices add a layer of protection.
- Considering a whole-home surge protector, which helps protect all your home's electrical devices. While more of an investment than the plug-in variety, it works by diverting power from appliances and electronics through a home's grounding wires. It can also help protect appliances from spikes related to lightning strikes and other electrical issues. This type of whole-home protection should be installed by a qualified electrician directly into your home's electrical panel.
- Unplugging unessential appliances. Taking this simple step can help reduce the amount of power your home uses. If done in multiple homes, it may help shorten the length of the brownout.
- Being prepared for an outage. Unfortunately, brownouts are not always successful in reducing the load. Keep your home stocked with flashlights, batteries, water, non-perishable food and other emergency items in the event of an extended power outage.
- Having a fully charged portable power bank on hand. If the power goes out or a brownout lasts more than a few hours, you can use your mobile device to let us know about the issues you are experiencing. It is also good to have a fully charged cell phone on hand in case of an emergency.

For more information on electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



Why are my lights flickering?

Along with reduced illumination from brownouts, lights can flicker or blink for other reasons. The problem may be:

- **Light bulbs.** If just one light is flickering or blinking, check that the light bulb is not loose. A light bulb may also flicker if it is not the proper voltage for the fixture or if you plugged a standard bulb into a dimmer switch. The fix may be as easy as replacing it with the proper bulb.
- **Electrical wiring.** If the lighting in the entire room or the whole house flickers, it could be a sign of a larger issue. Hire a certified electrician to inspect your home to make sure your electrical wiring system and connections are up to date.
- **Appliances.** If the flickering seems to coincide with a major appliance drawing power, such as a refrigerator, the issue may be an overloaded circuit or the appliance itself. Have your appliance inspected to make sure it is wired for maximum ampacity and that the circuit is safe to use. (Ampacity is the maximum amount of current that a wire can safely carry.)
- **An overloaded circuit.**
- **Meter box or main service connection issues.**
- **Other issues.** If you share a meter with a neighbor, their energy use could potentially affect your home as well. However, if the whole neighborhood is experiencing problems, contact us to report the issue.

For more information on electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.