

President's Report



Josh DeWees
President/CEO

May is Electrical Safety Month

Electricity lights homes and businesses, provides warmth, and keeps appliances and equipment running smoothly. During Electrical Safety Month, Spoon River Electric and Safe Electricity provide these electrical safety tips to avoid hazards both inside and outdoors.

Staying safe on the road

Downed power lines can happen because of wind, storms, animals or auto accidents.

1. If you see a downed power line, call 911 to report it and stay in your car. You cannot tell by looking or listening if the power line is deenergized. Wait in your vehicle until an electric utility crew member says it is safe to get out.
2. Do not drive over a downed power line. Doing so could cause a domino effect and bring down other lines, poles and equipment.
3. The only time you should exit is if your vehicle is on fire. If that's the case, make a solid jump from the car without touching it, landing with both feet together. Then, hop away with your feet together as far as you can.

Staying safe outside

When working outside, be aware of overhead and underground power lines.

1. Keep at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines. Keep any items you are carrying or using, such as poles or other extended equipment, 10 feet away from power lines at all times. Carry ladders or other far-reaching tools horizontally.



2. Make sure all outside outlets are ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protected.
3. Before digging, call 811. Buried lines such as electricity, gas, water and sewer bring services inside. Besides the dangers of digging up underground utilities, the home/landowner is responsible for fines due to damage. Privately owned lines won't be marked by the free service.
4. If you see lightning, take shelter inside an enclosed building or a hard-topped vehicle. Stay away from high places, and don't take shelter under trees. No place outside is safe. Stay away from items that conduct electricity, such as metal fences. If you're swimming or in a hot tub, get out.

Staying safe inside

With so many people working from home, the workplace and where you live can be the same place. This means more devices are

Continued on 18C ▶



Spoon River Electric Cooperative will be closed May 30 for Memorial Day.

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

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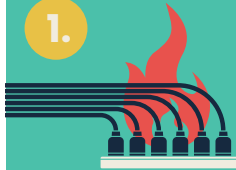
Spoon River Electric Cooperative – By the Numbers

Miles of line energized: 1,272
Number of members served: 5,022
Number of power poles
in territory: 29,361

ELECTRICITY 101

To stay safe around electricity,
start with these **SEVEN** basic tips:

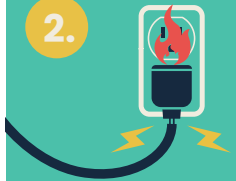
1.



DON'T OVERLOAD OUTLETS OR CIRCUITS

Plugging in too many items or drawing too much power on a circuit can cause overheating, fire, and damage to devices.

2.



DON'T USE FAULTY ELECTRICAL CORDS OR PLUGS

Do not use cords that look frayed, worn or cracked. Do not use broken plugs. Never remove the grounding pin from a three-pronged plug.

3.



HAVE YOUR ELECTRICIAN'S NUMBER IN YOUR PHONE

Most electrical repairs or installations are not DIY projects. Hire an expert to avoid serious injury or wiring problems.

4.



BE CAREFUL AROUND H₂O

Never use electricity while standing in damp or wet conditions. Keep all electrical devices away from water, including cell phones that are charging.

5.



EVALUATE YOUR APPLIANCES

Do not use appliances in disrepair. Older or broken appliances can overheat, start a fire, and cause serious injuries.

6.



TEST YOUR GFCIs

Outlets near a water source should be equipped with GFCIs, which help prevent shock and electrocution caused by ground faults. Test monthly to make sure they are working.

7.



MAKE SURE YOUR HOME IS UP TO CODE

Your home should be properly wired and electrically sound. Contact a reputable electrician to evaluate your home.

Safe
Electricity.org®

Safety Month continued from 18A

plugged into outlets or circuits that may not be able to handle the load.

1. Have a qualified electrician/licensed contractor check for hazards if you notice dimming lights, a sizzling or buzzing sound, the smell of warm plastic, a switch plate that feels warm or looks scorched, sparks when plugging in or unplugging items, or circuits that trip often.
2. When working with electrical equipment inside the house or shop, be aware that electrical equipment can spark when flammable vapors, gases or dust are present.
3. Do not overstretch a cord or use frayed or damaged cords.
4. During storms, lightning can enter homes through corded phones, TVs, radios or computers. Lightning can even travel

through plumbing, so never bathe, shower or wash dishes when you see lightning. If possible, unplug appliances and electronics before the storm, including charging cell phones. Surges caused by lightning can damage electronics and appliances.

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

Selecting a tree? Know its mature height before deciding where to plant

If you are considering planting a tree, carefully select its location before you begin digging. Also, call 811 before you break ground to get underground utilities marked. If trees are planted in the wrong location, they can be expensive to maintain and even dangerous. Spoon River Electric and Safe Electricity offer tips on how to pick an optimal location.



A mature height of fewer than 15 feet is recommended if planting near lines. Some trees that are generally not tall enough to interfere with lines include crabapple, honeysuckle, juniper, flowering dogwood and hawthorn.

Trees should never be planted directly under power lines, near poles or too close to electrical equipment.

Once you have a tree selected, call 811 before putting a shovel to the ground. The “Call Before You Dig”

number is a free service that locates and marks public underground utilities in your yard or on your land. Call several business days before you plan to dig. Locators will mark public underground utilities such as electric, gas, water, cable and fiber. The service does not mark privately owned lines or pipes.

Other tree tips

- If your established trees are growing into power lines, contact us to ask about them. In some cases (depending on the tree’s location), we will come out and trim the tree. If it is your responsibility, do not take on the task yourself. Only tree trimmers who are line-clearance certified are legally allowed to prune and trim trees within 10 feet of power lines.
- It is important to have trees trimmed. Limbs can fall on power lines during bad weather, resulting in power outages or blinking lights. Broken or drooping limbs could also cause a fire.
- Tall-growing trees with a mature height greater than 45 feet should be planted at least 45 feet away from lines to avoid future pruning. Some of these trees include oak, white and blue spruce, most pines and most maples.
- Be sure no one climbs a tree near power lines. If branches are touching the wires, the tree could be energized. Even branches that do not touch power lines could become energized if a child’s weight is added. In addition, a child could climb high into the tree and be able to reach the line.

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



Restoring power safely and efficiently

We do our best to avoid them, but there's no way around it: power outages happen.

For most Spoon River Electric members, outages are rare and only last a few hours. But when major storms, like the Father's Day 2021 Tornado that impacted our area, extended outages are unavoidable.

So, when the power goes out, how do Spoon River Electric crews know where to start working? How do you know if your outage has been reported? We've got answers to these questions and more, and it all starts with a safe, efficient plan for power restoration.

When the lights go out and it's safe for our crews to begin the restoration process, they start by repairing power lines and equipment that will restore power to the greatest number of people in the shortest time possible.

This process typically begins with repairs to the larger main distribution lines that service a great number of homes and businesses. After those repairs are made, crews work on tap

lines, which deliver power to transformers, either mounted on utility poles (for above-ground service) or placed on pads (for underground service). Finally, individual service lines that run between the transformer and the home are repaired.

We can't control the weather, but we can prepare for it. Spoon River Electric keeps a supply of extra utility poles, transformers and other equipment on hand so we can quickly get to work in the event of an outage. When widespread outages occur, multiple crews will be out in the field simultaneously working to repair damage at multiple locations. We also coordinate with nearby co-ops to bring in additional crews when necessary.

A proactive approach to maintenance helps minimize the chance of prolonged outages; this is why you see Spoon River Electric crews trimming trees and clearing vegetation near rights-of-way. We love trees too, but it only takes one overgrown limb to knock out power for an entire neighborhood.

Trimming improves power reliability for our entire community. In addition to managing vegetation, we regularly inspect utility poles, power lines and other critical equipment to maintain a more reliable system.

If you experience a power outage, don't assume a neighbor reported it. It's best to report the outage yourself, and we make it easy to do. The quickest way to report an outage is by calling and reporting it at 309-647-2700.

If you have a medical condition that requires electrical equipment, please let us know, and always have a backup plan in place. This plan could include a portable generator, extra medical supplies or moving to an alternate location until power is restored. If you plan to use a generator for backup power, read all safety information and instructions before use.

Mother Nature can be unpredictable, but as a member of Spoon River Electric, you can feel confident knowing we're standing by, ready to restore power as quickly and safely as possible.

LIGHTING THE WAY

2022 ANNUAL MEETING

THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 2022 • 4:00-7:00 P.M.

NEW LOCATION:

FULTON COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS, LEWISTOWN, ILLINOIS

