



Alan W. Wattles

Across The President's Desk

Ensuring electric safety during spring and summer activities

As spring blooms and summer approaches, many of us eagerly anticipate spending more time outdoors. Whether it's lounging by the pool, sprucing up the garden or embarking on outdoor projects, it's essential to prioritize electric safety to prevent accidents. Here are some key tips to keep in mind:

- **Install GFCIs:** Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) are crucial for poolside outlets as they quickly cut off power in the event of a ground fault, reducing the risk of electric shock.

engaging in water activities near lakes. Maintain a safe distance to avoid accidental contact, especially when using tall objects like fishing rods or antennas.

Safe gardening practices

- **Call before digging:** Whether planting new flowers or installing landscaping features, always call 811 to have underground utility lines marked before digging to avoid accidental contact with electrical cables.
- **Mind overhead lines:** Be cautious of overhead power lines when using tall equipment like ladders or pruning tools. Maintain a safe distance to prevent accidental contact.

Outdoor projects

- **Use outdoor-rated extension cords:** When using power tools or equipment outdoors, always use extension cords rated for outdoor use. These cords are designed to withstand exposure to weather conditions.
- **Avoid water contact:** Never operate electrical tools or appliances in wet conditions or while standing on damp ground. Store equipment indoors when not in use to prevent exposure to moisture.

By following these electric safety tips, you can enjoy a safe and worry-free spring and summer season filled with outdoor activities and projects. Remember, prioritizing safety today ensures many more seasons of enjoyment ahead.

Poolside and lake precautions

- **Check electrical devices:** Before opening your pool for the season, inspect all electrical devices such as pumps, lighting and outlets for any signs of damage or wear. Replace or repair as needed.
- **Keep cords away:** Ensure that all electrical cords for poolside devices are positioned away from the pool and water sources to prevent accidental contact.
- **Avoid swimming near boat docks:** Swimming near boat docks or marinas can expose you to electrical hazards from nearby boats or dockside electrical outlets. Swim in designated areas away from these potential dangers.
- **Stay clear of power lines:** Be mindful of overhead power lines when setting up camp or



ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Looking for an easy way to manage home energy use? Smart plugs are inexpensive and offer convenient solutions for scheduling and controlling your favorite electronic devices.

With smart plugs, you can easily manage your coffee maker, lighting, home office equipment, video game consoles and more. Smart plugs can help you manage devices through a smart phone app, your home assistant or voice control. By conveniently powering off or scheduling devices, you can save energy (and money!).

Source: energystar.gov



DON'T PLUG THESE 15 THINGS INTO A POWER STRIP

It is fine to plug in some things into a power strip, such as computers, lamps, phones and other light-load electronics.

However, appliances that require a lot of power should not be plugged into a power strip. Do not use a power strip with the following appliances:

IN THE KITCHEN

- × Refrigerators
- × Microwave ovens
- × Toasters
- × Coffee makers
- × Blenders
- × Slow cookers
- × Rice cookers

IN THE BATHROOM

- × Hair dryers
- × Curling irons
- × Other hairstyling tools

IN THE LAUNDRY ROOM

- × Washing machines
- × Dryers

ANYWHERE

- × Sump pumps
- × Space heaters
- × Portable air conditioners



Do not overload power strips by plugging in appliances that consume more watts than the cord can handle. This can cause the power strip to overheat or start a fire.

Safe Electricity.org®
Learn more at:

Do not overlook overhead power lines

It can be easy to overlook things that we see every day, including overhead power lines. However, failure to notice overhead lines can be deadly. If you or an object you are touching contacts or gets too close to a power line, you could be seriously injured or killed.

Overhead power lines require 10 feet of clearance in all directions. This distance rule applies to the power lines draped from pole to pole that line roads (distribution lines), as well as the drop-down lines that service homes or other structures.

If your job requires you to operate equipment in the vicinity of large transmission lines and towers, they require even more clearance than distribution and drop-down lines. That clearance is determined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). OSHA mandates line clearance distances for all types of power lines.

Be mindful of overhead power lines when completing the following tasks:

Home maintenance

Always be aware of the location of power lines, particularly when using long tools, such as ladders, pool skimmers and pruning poles. Lower long tools and equipment before moving or transporting them. Other safety tips include:

- Carry ladders and other long items horizontally whenever possible.
- Be careful when working on or around your roof.
- Never go on a roof in windy or bad weather.



Yard work

When trimming trees, do not allow yourself or trimmers to come within 10 feet of overhead power lines, including service lines to your home or outbuilding. Also:

- Do not trim trees near power lines; instead, leave this to certified line clearance tree trimmers.
- Do not use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near electric lines.

Farming

Review power line locations and other potential electrical hazards with all workers at morning safety meetings. Equipment that could get too close or contact a power pole or line includes sprayer tips, tall equipment, dump trucks, augers and other extensions.

At work

Follow all OSHA distance requirements when operating dump trucks, cranes, concrete pump truck extensions and when working on a roof or in a bucket.

Other reminders

- Do not come within 50 feet of a downed or damaged power line. Warn others to stay away. Call 911 to report it.
- Never climb trees near power lines. Even if the power lines are not touching the tree, they could come in contact when weight is added to the branch.

Look up and look out for overhead power lines. Contact can happen in an instant. For additional electrical safety tips, go to SafeElectricity.org.

MCEC line outages March 2024

Date	Duration	# Out	Map Location	Cause Desc	Substation
03/08/24	1:43	209	Millstadt South	Vehicles or machinery	Millstadt
03/21/24	1:27	1	Gall Rd	Public accidents, other	N. Waterloo
03/23/24	1:27	814	New Athens Area	Other, faulty equipment	New Athens
03/29/24	1:10	18	Nollmann Rd	Other, faulty equipment	Millstadt



www.mcec.org

6132 State Rt. 3 • P.O. Box 128

Waterloo, Illinois 62298

618-939-7171 • 800-757-7433

Office hours:

Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



Apply Online!



2024 Annual Meeting Scholarship Application

Fifteen - \$500 Scholarships to be awarded by drawing at the Annual Meeting on June 8, 2024

Eligibility

- The applicant **must be** a high school senior for the 2023/2024 school year to qualify.
- The applicant must be a member in good standing of Monroe County Electric Cooperative, or is the dependent of a member of the Cooperative who is in good standing, and must have been a member for one year prior to May 31, 2024.
- All paper applications must be signed by the applicant and parent or legal guardian (if a dependent). Signatures for online submissions will be typed. Incomplete applications will not be accepted. Applications must be returned to the cooperative by 4:00pm, June 3, 2024.
- The applicant must be enrolled, or have applied for enrollment, in a full-time undergraduate course of study at an accredited two or four-year college, university, vocational or post-secondary school for the Fall 2024 term.
- All applicants must check in at the registration table before 9:30 a.m. the morning of the Annual Meeting and must be present to win.
- The scholarship will be awarded to the recipient upon verification of enrollment.

Applicant Name: _____ Age: _____

Mailing Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Parent/Legal Guardian Name (s) (only in case of dependent): _____

MCEC Account Name and Number: _____

Phone Number: _____ E-mail Address: _____

College/School Attending Fall 2024: _____

High School Graduated From: _____ Year of Graduation: _____

By signing this application you hereby agree the information provided is true and correct, and permission is granted for Monroe County Electric Cooperative and associated organizations to use your information and your photograph for publicity purposes.

Applicant signature _____ Date _____

Parent signature _____ Date _____

Email completed application to jrohr@mcec.org or mail to: MCEC, P.O. Box 128, Waterloo, IL 62298 Attn: Julie Rohr