

Play It Safe with Power Lines



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER ALAN LESLEY

I read a pretty amazing story the other day. It involved two teens in Indiana, Lee Whittaker and Ashley Taylor, who were driving down the road with some friends when their car started to fishtail. Lee did his best to keep the vehicle on the road. But before he knew it, he was sliding straight into a utility pole—and that pole came down, lines and all, right on top of his overturned car.

Now, most folks faced with this situation would do what comes naturally: Get out of the car. But Lee and Ashley knew better. Not a week earlier, they had attended a safety demonstration at their school sponsored by their local electric co-op. One of the key messages relayed was “stay in your car if it ever hits a power pole, where you’ll be safe from any electrical current.”

The two did just that and kept their friends in the car and family members at a safe distance once they arrived. As a result, the entire group walked away with just a few minor injuries. However, without basic knowledge of electrical safety, the outcome that night could have been much different.

The electricity CECA provides day-in and day-out is a phenomenal resource, powering our modern lifestyles in a safe, reliable and affordable way. But electricity

must be respected. If safety isn’t made a priority, what changes our lives for the better could change them for the worse in an instant.

Lee and Ashley know this from experience, and we’re striving to keep you informed of electrical safety so you don’t have to learn a similar lesson the hard way.

Safety is a fundamental part of the culture at CECA. Being an electric lineworker is ranked by the U.S. Department of Labor as one of the country’s top 10 most danger-



If your vehicle comes in contact with a power line, would you know what to do?

ous jobs, on the same list as fishermen, loggers and military servicemen. We demand that not only those out in the field, but also employees at all levels make safety a top priority.

As part of our safety commitment, please take time to learn how you can be safe around electricity at home. Spending just a few minutes with some helpful resources can make all the difference when you’re faced with a possible unsafe situation. For more information on electrical safety, please visit our website, at www.ceca.coop, as well as SafeElectricity.org and esfi.org.

I hope there won’t be any stories about CECA members getting into sticky situations like Lee and Ashley did. But if there are, a few minutes spent studying safety today could ensure a happy ending.



Tax Holiday

If you’ve had your eye on an energy-efficient appliance, Memorial Day weekend might be the time to buy. That weekend, shoppers in Texas will not pay sales tax on certain Energy Star-rated appliances.

The tax holiday, created by the Legislature in 2007, runs from May 24-26 this year.

Items exempt from taxes that weekend include any of these products that are Energy Star-rated:

- ▶ Air conditioners priced at \$6,000 or less
- ▶ Ceiling fans
- ▶ Clothes washers
- ▶ Dehumidifiers
- ▶ Dishwashers
- ▶ Incandescent and fluorescent lightbulbs
- ▶ Programmable thermostats
- ▶ Refrigerators priced at \$2,000 or less

Clothes dryers are not rated by Energy Star and are not included. Water heaters are also excluded, even those rated by Energy Star.

The holiday covers Internet, catalog and layaway sales of qualifying products as well. In addition to the purchase price, the tax holiday extends to shipping, delivery and installation charges if the purchased item becomes a permanent part of a home, such as a ceiling fan or a plumbed-in dishwasher.

In addition to the listed tax rebates, CECA offers rebates through our ecoPOWR Rebate Program. The rebates are available on several of the items listed above and on items not listed. If you have made energy-efficient purchases and are wondering if they qualify, find out by calling us at 1-800-915-2533, or by clicking on the light bulb on the Home Page of our website at www.ceca.coop.

Wisely Use That Window Unit

No central air conditioning? No problem! Your window or room air conditioner doesn't have to be an energy hog. Follow these energy tips when using your window unit, and say goodbye to higher bills.

Purchase an Energy Star model. Energy Star room air conditioners cost at least 10 percent less to operate than conventional models. And if you replace your existing room air conditioner with an Energy Star unit with an Energy Efficiency Ratio (EER) of at least 9.8, you could qualify for a rebate through CECA's ecoPOWER Rebate Program.

Use a timer. Set the plug-in timer to turn off the air conditioner when you leave home and to turn it on just before you return.

Purchase a unit with varying fan speeds. Use a room air conditioner with fan speed control. This allows faster cooling when needed and quieter, more efficient operation at other times.

Keep the unit centrally located. To allow better air circulation, install your room air conditioner in the window or area of the wall that is nearest to the middle of the space being cooled.

Seal the unit. Once a room air conditioner is in place, seal the space around it to prevent warm outside air from leaking in.

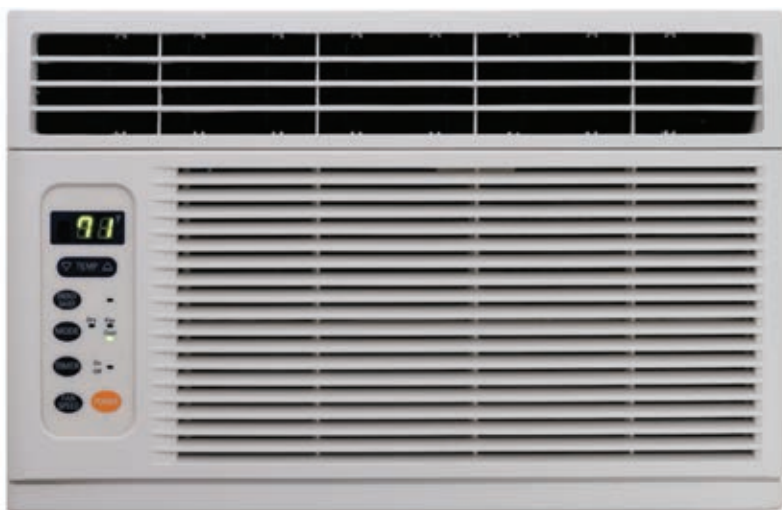
Don't set the thermostat at high initially. When you first turn on your room air conditioner, set the thermostat at normal or medium. Setting it any colder won't cool the room any faster.

Keep the unit out of the sun. Locate your room air conditioner on the shady side of your home. It will operate more efficiently in a cooler location.

Close the fresh-air vent. Make sure the fresh-air vent is closed when the room air conditioner is operating so you aren't cooling outside air. Open the vent when the outside air is cooler to let in fresh air.

Remove the unit at the end of the cooling season. Take your room air conditioner out of the window when the cooling season is over. If you must leave the unit in place, cover the outside of the unit with a weatherproof cover and fill any cracks around the unit with removable caulk.

If you replace an existing room air conditioner with an Energy Star unit with an EER of at least 9.8, CECA offers a rebate to help defray some of the cost of the new unit. To check out this rebate and a variety of others, visit our website at www.ceca.coop, or call us at 1-800-915-2533.



Buying an Energy Star window air conditioner will save you money on your energy bill each month.

CECA

P.O. Box 729
Comanche, TX 76442

Operating in Brown, Callahan, Comanche, Eastland, Mills, Shackelford and Stephens counties

HEADQUARTERS

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EARLY OFFICE

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Early, TX 76801

EASTLAND OFFICE

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Eastland, TX 76448

OFFICE HOURS

Comanche Office: Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Early Office: Monday, Wednesday and Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., closed from 1 to 2 p.m.

Eastland Office: Tuesday and Thursday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

YOUR LOCAL PAGES

This section of Texas Co-op Power is produced by CECA each month to provide you with information about current events, special programs and other activities of the cooperative. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact Shirley at the Comanche office or at sdukes@ceca.coop.



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Switch the direction of your ceiling fan with the change of the seasons to improve airflow.

Ways To Be More Energy Wise

Make sure all exhaust fans in your home are working properly and are dust-free. Regularly wash or replace filters. Consider installing a timer switch on your bathroom fan so that it runs only as long as it is required.

Make sure you change the direction of airflow on your ceiling fan. In the winter, let the fan run clockwise to push warm air toward the floor. In summer, switch the direction to draw air upward, cooling the room and ensuring constant airflow.

In preparing for the summer, consider investing in some insulated, thermal-backed drapes for your windows. They'll help keep your home cool in summer and warm in winter.

Before buying an air-conditioning unit or system, find out its energy-efficiency ratio. Calculate the EER by dividing the unit's cooling capacity (Btu/hour) by its energy requirement (watts). An EER of 10 or more is very good, and 6 or 7 is fair. Remember to buy the smallest capacity unit or system that will meet your needs.

Have you ever thought about installing an attic ventilator? An attic ventilating system draws cool air up through the house and can provide the same level of comfort as an air conditioner at a much lower cost. Pump in cool air during summer evenings then seal your home during the day. Attic ventilation can help lower winter heating bills, too.

Have a look at your foundation walls. If you have an unfinished basement or crawlspace, check for air leaks by looking for spiderwebs. If there's a web, there's a draft. A large amount of heat is also lost from an uninsulated basement.

Does your home have a sliding glass door? Make sure to keep its track clean. A dirty track can ruin the door's seal and create gaps where heat or cold air can escape.

When dust and pet hair build up on your refrigerator's condenser coils, the motor works harder and uses more electricity. As part of your cleaning routine, make sure the coils are cleaned and air can circulate freely.

Don't forget to check the seals on your refrigerator door to make sure they are clean and tight. Your refrigerator accounts for up to 11 percent of your household's total energy use, which can have a major effect on your energy bill.

If you're thinking about purchasing a new appliance, always look for the Energy Star label on new appliances. These products are more energy efficient and can help reduce your energy costs.

**'Who kept the faith
and fought the fight;
The glory theirs, the
duty ours.'**

*- Wallace Bruce, in his poem
"Memorial Day"*

CECA salutes the men and women who have paid the ultimate price to secure the freedoms we enjoy today.



Our offices will be closed Monday, May 26, in observance of Memorial Day.

As always, personnel are on standby in case of an outage.

PHOTO: JON HELGASON | ISTOCK | THINKSTOCK

**POWER
TIP**

Save ENERGY • Save MONEY

Maintain your water heater to save money

Drain a quart of water from your water heater's tank every three months to remove sediment that impedes heat transfer and lowers its efficiency. Follow the manufacturer's directions to perform the task.

Source: energysavers.gov

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Tame Your Trees

We love our trees, but when branches are too close to power lines, they can cause power outages, fire hazards and other safety concerns.

Here are some rules to follow:

- ▶ If a tree or a large branch is touching—or falls on—an electric line, call your electric cooperative immediately. Tree sap is an excellent conductor of electricity, so a downed branch on a line is an electrocution hazard as well as a fire hazard.
- ▶ Never trim trees that grow close to power lines; that is a job for professionals. Call your electric cooperative for assistance and guidance.
- ▶ Use extreme caution when doing any overhead trimming. Branches often fall in unexpected places.
- ▶ Don't allow children to climb trees or build tree houses close to power lines.
- ▶ Plant appropriate distances from all power lines—those along the street or right-of-way, as well as those running to your home and outbuildings.
- ▶ When planting a tree, plan ahead. A tiny tree may eventually grow large enough to damage power lines and possibly interrupt power during storms. At maturity, your trees should be at least 10 feet away from power lines.

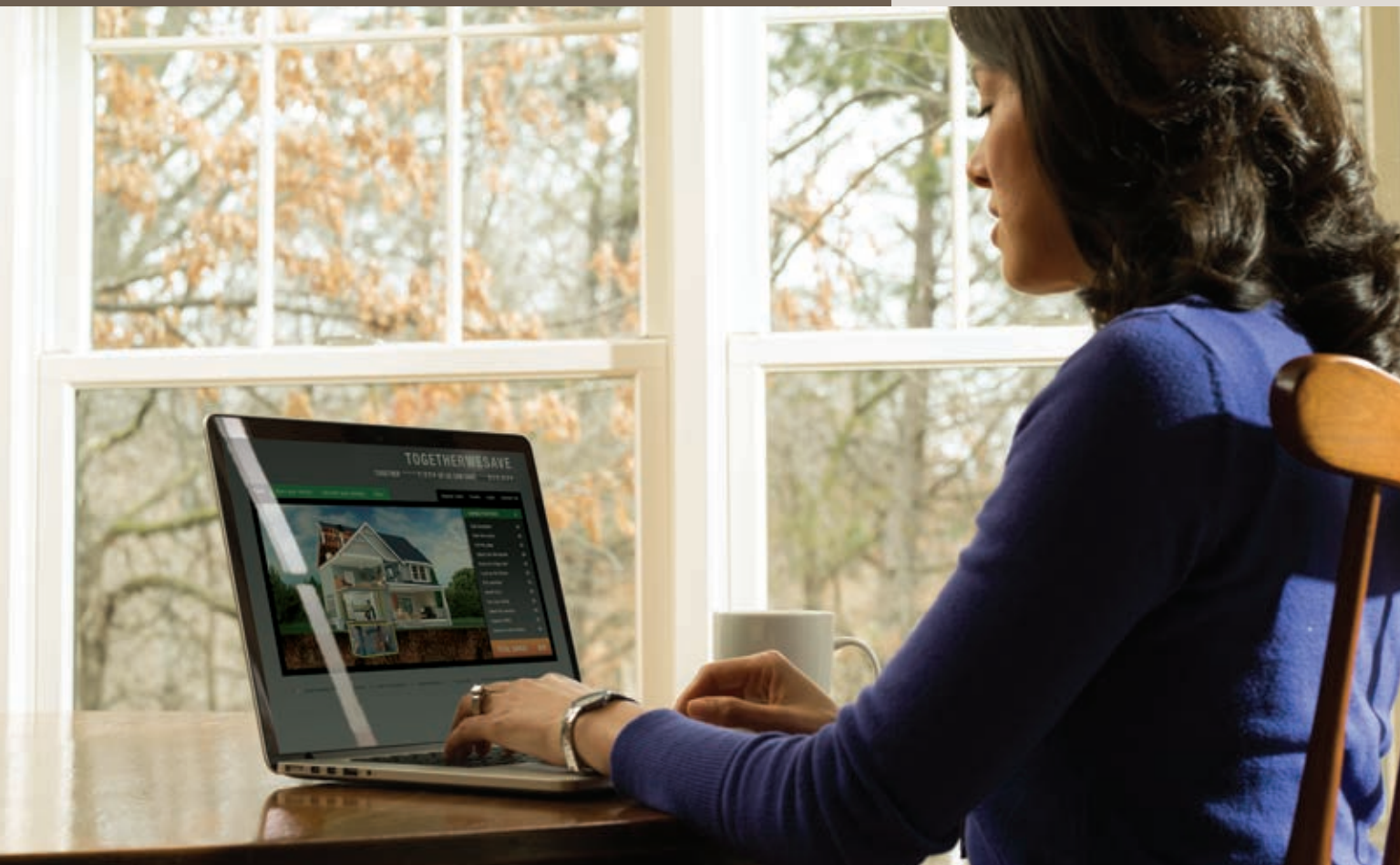
CECA employs three contract tree-trimming crews to assist in the management of trees and brush encroaching on our power lines. These crews are working on lines from Zephyr to Mullin in Mills County, and north of Nimrod to south of Interstate 20 in Eastland County.



WE ARE ALL UP TO THE CHALLENGE. Using technology to better serve every member helps your electric co-op achieve energy efficiency. And when we work together to use energy wisely, we all save money together. Learn more about the power of your electric co-op membership at TogetherWeSave.com.



TOGETHERWESAVE.COM



Keep Kids Safe Outdoors

Share these safety rules with youngsters before turning them loose outside

Summer vacation is about to begin for thousands of schoolchildren across the state. We all know that children love going outdoors to swim, fly kites, climb trees and play with their friends. Although playing outdoors can be a great pastime, there are electrical hazards that children need to be aware of to keep them safe. Safe Electricity offers a variety of tips to share with children before they head outdoors.

Make sure your children know these safety rules:

Stay away from pad-mounted transformers.

Pad-mounted transformers are green metal boxes that contain the above-ground portion of an underground electrical installation. These cabinets carry high voltages and are safe when locked, but they can be deadly if someone reaches inside. If you see one in your neighborhood that is open, call authorities and CECA immediately.

Never enter an electrical substation for any reason.

If a ball or other toy enters the fence surrounding the substation, call CECA for help. Substations hold deadly amounts of electricity and should be entered only by professionals.

Always be aware of overhead power lines.

Do not fly kites or model planes near power lines or electrical substations. A kite string can conduct electricity from an overhead line directly to the person on the ground.

Be careful when using Mylar balloons for a party. These metallic balloons conduct electricity, so never tie one to a child. If the balloon comes into contact with electricity, the child could receive a fatal shock.

Ensure that your children are protected from the electrical service connection to your home. Keep ladders or long poles stowed and away from youngsters who might be tempted to use them to reach the wires connected to your house. Also be aware of these lines around pools. Pool skimmers can be long enough to reach service connection lines.

Never climb trees near power lines.

If branches are touching the wires, the tree could be energized. Even branches not touching power lines could become energized if a child's weight is added.

If you hear thunder, go inside.

Finally, storm fronts can move rapidly, and lightning can strike 10 miles in advance of a storm. Remember this rule from the National Weather Service: When thunder roars, go indoors. Make sure kids know that it is not safe to be outside during a storm.

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



Be careful of nearby overhead lines when using long-handled tools like pool skimmers.

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