

Five Ways to Safeguard Your Home This Winter

As the temperatures drop and the days grow shorter, there's a natural inclination to create a warm and cozy haven at home. Unfortunately, as we see increased use of heating equipment, candles, and electrical items, the number of home fires tends to increase during winter months.

Here are five ways you can safeguard your home for the winter season.



1. Ensure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working properly. If your detectors are battery-operated, replace the batteries annually. Test the detectors once a month, and give them a good dusting to ensure the sensors are clear of dirt and debris.



2. Inspect electrical cords. We depend on more cords during winter, whether for holiday lighting, extension cords, or portable heaters. Before using any corded items, double check to make sure cords aren't frayed or cracked. Only use extension cords as temporary solutions – extension cords are not intended for long-term use. If you use portable space heaters, remember to keep them at least three feet away from flammable items. Use models that include an auto shut-off feature and overheat protection. Space heaters can take a toll on your energy bills. Use them efficiently (to heat smaller spaces) and safely. Never plug a space heater into a power strip. Speaking of power strips...



3. Avoid overloading electrical outlets and power strips. When overloaded with electrical items, outlets and power strips can overheat and catch fire. If you use power strips for multiple devices, make sure the strip can handle the electrical load. For a safer bet, look for power strips that include surge protection.

continued on page 8-B ►

WIN

ONE OF TWO MONTHLY \$5 BILL CREDITS

THIS MONTH'S CONTEST:

Submit your answers to the brain teasers on page 8-D. The solutions will be published in the December edition of *The Connection*.



Winners for the month of September:

Merrell & Mona Kilborn, Marshalltown
Joe & Jody Melcher, Nevada

Here's how to enter:

1. Answer the question or challenge posed each month.

2. Send answers to Consumers Energy with:

- Name
- Service Address
- Account Number
- Phone Number
- Email Address

Submit via email or mail:

Email to: kglenny@consumersenergy.coop
Subject line: Contest

Mail to: Consumers Energy
Attn: Contest
2074 242nd Street
Marshalltown, IA 50158

3. Winners' names will be drawn at random and published in upcoming issues of *The Connection*.

November 2023

Dates To Remember:

November

- 3 Bills Due
- 3 Automatic Payments Deducted
- 5 Daylight Saving Time Ends
- 10 Email / Mail Bills
- 23-24 Thanksgiving Holiday Office Closed**
- 27 Automatic Payments Deducted

December

- 1 Read Meters
- 3 Bills Due
- 4 Automatic Payments Deducted

Five Ways to Safeguard Your Home This Winter *(continued)*



4. Clean the fireplace to improve safety and efficiency. There's nothing better than a warm fire on a chilly night, but it's important to maintain your fireplace for safety. As wood burns, a sticky substance known as creosote builds up in the chimney. When creosote buildup becomes too thick, a chimney fire can ignite. The chimney should be cleaned at least once a year to reduce fire risks. Regular cleaning also improves air flow, and limits the amount of carbon monoxide that seeps indoors.



5. Practice safety in the kitchen. As we spend more time in the kitchen during the holiday season, be mindful of potential fire hazards. Never leave food that's cooking on the stovetop unattended. Clean and remove spilled foods from cooking surfaces, and be mindful of where you place flammable items like dish towels.

*Consumers Energy wants you and your family to stay safe during the winter season.
Visit www.consumersenergy.coop for additional safety tips.*

Bridget Itzen

**Bridget Itzen,
CEO/General Manager**

Appliance Recycling through the cooperative will end in December 2023

Consumers Energy's agreement with CLEAResult will end in December 2023.

If members have a working refrigerator, freezer, or window air conditioner, call CLEAResult before December 15, 2023, at

855- 838-7817

to have appliances picked up.

Limit of three (3) operational appliances per member address.

GOING ONLINE TO MAKE PAYMENT?



SmartHub allows members to manage bills, view usage, sign up for account notifications via text and email, contact co-op staff, and more!

To sign up for SmartHub, you will need your account number and your name as it appears on your electric bill.

USE THIS QR CODE TO ACCESS SMARTHUB ONLINE:



DOWNLOAD THE SMARTHUB APP TO ACCESS YOUR ACCOUNT
ON YOUR SMARTPHONE OR DEVICE:



THE STEPS TO RESTORING POWER

When the power goes out, line crews work hard to restore electricity as quickly and safely as possible. To ensure the process is done efficiently, line crews follow specific steps to restore power. Can you order the steps below to match how power is restored?

Hint: Check your work in the answer key.



STEP #

Tap lines are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers that are either mounted on utility poles or placed on pads for underground electric service.



STEP #

Distribution power lines are inspected. These are the lines you typically see on the side of the road that deliver power to communities.



STEP #

Large, high-voltage transmission lines are inspected for damage. These power lines deliver large amounts of electricity over great distances.



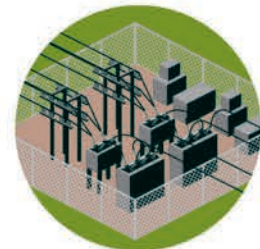
STEP #

Service lines are inspected. These are the power lines that run **between the transformer and your home**.



STEP #

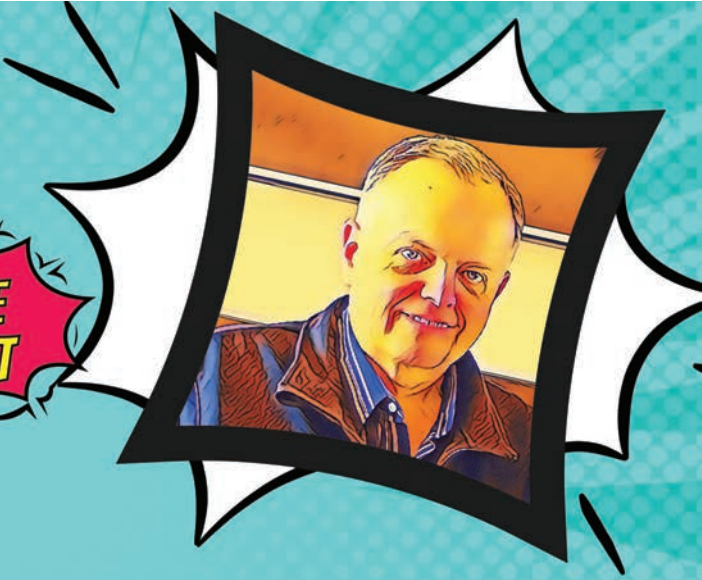
Distribution substations are inspected. These facilities lower the voltage of power, then send power to distribution lines.



Answer Key: 4, 3, 1, 5, 2

JEFF LANNING

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



JOB: ENERGY ADVISOR



DREAM VACATION: ALASKA



FAVE MOVIE: WESTERNS



FAVE RESTAURANT: THE FLYING ELBOW



FAVE ACTIVITY: GOING TO HAWKEYE GAMES

Brain Teasers

SOLVE THE WORD PUZZLES BELOW. ENTER THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER CONTEST BY SENDING IN YOUR ANSWERS! CONTEST DETAILS ARE ON PAGE 8-A.

SISTER

+DRESS

M MEAL M
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A A
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ICE³

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HALLOWEEN EMOJI PICTIIONARY ANSWERS

Here are the answers to the Halloween-themed item or activity from last month's newsletter contest.

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 7 |
| Haunted house | Scary story |
| 2 | 8 |
| Candied apple | Costume party |
| 3 | 9 |
| Scary movie | Black cat |
| 4 | 10 |
| Spider web | Ghost train |
| 5 | 11 |
| Pumpkin carving | Scare crow |
| 6 | 12 |
| Candy corn | Trick or Treat! |

Do you or anyone you care about have any medical equipment that requires electricity?



Preparing for Power Outage for Persons Dependent on Electricity

Power outages can occur for a variety of reasons including storms or an overloaded electric grid. Putting together a power outage plan now can help protect your health and safety in the event of a power failure.

1 Take an inventory of items you need that rely on electricity.
This may include oxygen concentrator, CPAP, wheelchairs, garage door, elevator, refrigerated medications, ventilator, home dialysis machine, and many other devices.

2 Assemble a power outage kit.

- Battery-operated flashlights or lanterns
- Back-up batteries for electrical equipment (keep these charged, even unused batteries lose power)
- Back-up oxygen tank, tubing, and mask
- Cell phone external battery or car charger adaptor

Information on general disaster supplies is available at www.ready.gov/kit

3 Talk with your healthcare provider and medical device provider about your power outage plan.

- Find out how long your medications will be OK without refrigeration.
- Get specific guidance for any medications that are critical.
- Get daytime and after-hours emergency phone numbers for your suppliers and providers.

4 Establish your support team in advance (family, caregiver, friends).

- Plan how you will communicate with your team; phones may not work.

5 Plan for back-up power.
Remember: Hospitals should not be a source of electrical support or oxygen during a power outage.

- Read your medical equipment manual and identify options you have for back-up power.
- If possible, purchase back-up batteries for your device, and keep them charged.

6 Plan where you will go in the event of an outage, and arrange transportation.

- Plan for a local and out-of-area location where you can access power.
- Identify what transportation you will use to go to a location with electricity.
- Keep car gas tank at least half-full at all times. (Gas station pumps may not work during outages.)

7 Consider owning a home generator, and know how to use it.

- Learn how to use and maintain the generator ahead of time.
- Have an adequate fuel supply, and store it safely.
- Always use generators outdoors, at least 25 feet away from your home.

8 Practice your plan with your support team.



Safety Driven: Pole Top Rescue

When lives are on the line, it's vital that Consumers Energy linemen act quickly and skillfully to ensure everyone's safety. In an emergency situation, our linemen must know the safest and most practical way to rescue their partner if they are rendered unconscious after making contact with an energized line.



Every year, our linemen undergo pole top rescue training with assistance from the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives' (IAEC) Safety and Loss Control instructors. Each lineman must successfully complete the testing process. Pictured here are the operations crew practicing pole top rescue techniques.



As an OSHA mandated safety training requirement, the training is designed to evaluate each lineman on their ability to properly rescue an injured and/or stranded lineman. Each lineman must balance their skills with safety, climb a pole, and rescue a 185-pound training mannequin. The lineman must then secure the mannequin using ropes and pulleys to safely deliver them back to the ground.

In a perfect world, this is one skill that one hopes a lineman never needs to use. But if they do, the training is an opportunity for the linemen to prepare and hone their skills if the need should ever arise.

Consumers Energy employees are honored for every 5 years of service to the cooperative.

At the October Safety Meeting, Consumers Energy recognized the commitment and dedication of these employees.



BRIDGET ITZEN, CEO/GENERAL MANAGER ~ 5 YEARS.
KIPPEN GLENNEY, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT/COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR ~ 10 YEARS.
KIM MEYER, COST ACCOUNTANT ~ 10 YEARS.
BRENDA HEDUM, FINANCE & ACCOUNTING COORDINATOR ~ 15 YEARS.
MAX UPAH, JOURNEYMAN LINEMAN ~ 5 YEARS

SIGN UP FOR

Automatic Bill Payment



Enroll today to pay your electric bill from your bank, savings & loan, or credit union checking account OR from your debit or credit card.

To sign up:

- Complete the form and submit to Consumers Energy. You can contact the office for a form or access the form online with this QR code:



- Or use SmartHub! Information for SmartHub is in the ad on page 8-B.

Contact the Member Services Department at 800-696-6552 or at info@consumersenergy.coop with questions.



ELECTRIC WATER HEATER OFFERINGS

Marathon[®] WATER HEATERS



Patented Insulation Process
2.5" polyurethane insulation
reduces heat loss for
greater energy efficiency

- **Unmatched durability** with corrosion-free tank.
- **Energy savings** make the total cost of ownership lower than typical water heaters.
- **Lightweight**, easy-to-maneuver construction.
- **Lifetime tank warranty** on registered water heaters.
- **Dimensions:** 66 3/4" tall x 23 1/2" diameter.



50-Gallon Marathon

Member Price: \$1,200 plus tax

Retail Price: \$1,429 plus tax



You may
qualify for a
FREE water
heater!

FREE ELECTRIC WATER HEATER!

**FREE 50-gallon Marathon for new construction
or gas-to-electric installations.**

Contact Consumers Energy for details.

For more information, contact Energy Advisor Jeff Lanning at
800-696-6552 or info@consumersenergy.coop.

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Energy Efficiency Cost per kWh:

\$0.000381

To report an outage, call 800-696-6552.

For the most accurate outage updates, check SmartHub or www.consumersenergy.coop for messages, the statewide outage map, or call Consumers Energy.

WAYS TO PAY YOUR CONSUMERS ENERGY BILL



Online or the app
www.consumersenergy.coop

Automatic recurring
monthly payments



In person

By phone 24/7
844-201-7196



By mail

By dropbox



2074 242nd Street | Marshalltown, IA 50158



641-752-1593 | 800-696-6552



641-752-5738



www.consumersenergy.coop



info@consumersenergy.coop

OFFICE HOURS

7:30 AM - 4:00 PM

MONDAY - FRIDAY



REBATES

- Residential
- Agricultural
- Commercial



PATRONAGE CAPITAL CREDITS

- Funds are allocated to members based on electric usage.
- Members receive funds when the cooperative retires margins.

For information on ways to pay or programs and services offered, contact the Member Services Department.