



## **The Importance of Electrical Safety Measures for Older Adults**

Statistics show that home fires, from a variety of causes, result in a significant number of deaths and injuries each year. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), U.S. fire departments respond to an estimated average of 371,700 home structure fires per year. These fires cause an estimated average of 2,590 civilian deaths and 12,910 civilian injuries.

Although electrical hazards plague the public at large, older adults are burdened with the gravest risk. Adults over the age of 65 are more than twice as likely to die from a house fire as the general population, and this risk increases with age. Those 75 years of age and over are challenged with a risk that is 2.8 times higher, and adults over 85 are at a staggering risk that is 3.7 times higher. As baby boomers enter retirement age, the United States Fire Administration (USFA) has predicted that the percentage of older Americans will increase significantly, thus making a corresponding increase in fire deaths and injuries among older adults probable.

Electrical failures are a leading cause of home fires every year, and electrical distribution and lighting equipment fires have been shown to increase in frequency with increasing dwelling age. Homes with aging electrical systems are at a heightened risk for electrical fires, posing a serious risk for older adults who have remained in the same home for an extended period of time.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, half of the homes in use in the United States were built before 1973, which is long before many of the electronics and appliances we use today were even invented. Unfortunately, our increased demands for energy can overburden an older home's electrical system causing fires or electrocutions.

Many home electrical fires can be prevented by using more up-to-date technology and by recognizing warning signs your home may be showing. Follow these easy safety tips to identify and prevent electrical hazards in your home:

- Regularly check all cords, outlets, switches, and appliances for signs of damage or wear.
- Use extension cords only temporarily.
- Be sure that outlets are not overloaded with too many devices. They can overheat and start a fire.
- Look and listen for warning signs of an electrical problem such as outlets and switches that are warm, or make crackling, sizzling or buzzing sounds.
- Always replace fuses or circuit breakers with the correct size and amperage. And make sure all circuits are labeled correctly.
- Consider having your breakers upgraded to state-of-the-art AFCI circuit breakers. Keep the electrical panel accessible so you can quickly shut off power in an emergency.

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***Daylight Savings Time Begins  
Sunday, March 13th.***



## *Manager's Message*

*By: Mark A. Suggs*

### *What is Load Forecast?*

When we hear the word “forecast,” we typically think of the weather. But electric cooperatives are tasked with managing a different type of forecast – a load forecast.

A load forecast is exactly what it sounds like – an estimate or prediction of how much electricity will be needed in the future. We all depend on power to meet our daily needs, but the amount we use varies from season to season, day to day and even hour by hour. This is why power suppliers plan far in advance to make sure there is enough power available to meet electricity demands.

Believe it or not, growth of electricity demand has actually decreased each decade since the 1950s, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Rising demand for electric services is offset by efficiency gains from new appliance standards and investments in energy efficient equipment.

As demand fluctuates, Pitt & Greene EMC is prepared to maintain electrical loads and keep the system running efficiently. This means extensive planning, even up to twenty years in advance. Pitt & Greene EMC works with North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation (NCEMC), to annually evaluate areas of growth and predict demand patterns for our local communities.

For example, if a new subdivision or residential area is constructed in our service territory, it's our responsibility to ensure that adequate power supply will be provided to the members of that community. This type of growth may mean running new poles and electrical lines to the site or even building a new substation. Whatever the need, Pitt & Greene EMC is prepared and will continue to provide members with safe, reliable electric service.

As technology changes, we're becoming more efficient. For example, we deployed AMR/AMI in 2011, which provides extremely accurate meter readings. In turn, this technology improves our ability to forecast future electrical loads.

In addition, NCEMC collects data from other electric co-ops in North Carolina, and from there they project future demand. Planning ahead improves reliability, and projecting the amount of electricity that will be purchased ensures the best economic price for power.

At Pitt & Greene EMC, we can't predict the future, but we can be prepared for what it holds. So leave the forecasting to us, and we'll continue to provide safe, reliable electricity to power your life.

## Electric Bills Affected By Weather Patterns

Electric bills vary with the seasons, driven by weather and consumer use patterns.

Weather matters. When it's cool outdoors, family members generally want the house warm. When it's warm outside, air conditioners make living areas pleasant.

How much weather affects your electric bills depends on many factors, including your home's original construction materials, insulation, and air leaks. Personal comfort plays a role too, as does the difference between the thermostat setting inside and temperatures outdoors.

When a house stays at 68 degrees Fahrenheit, but the outdoor temperature varies from being in the 30s in winter to more than 100 degrees on a muggy summer's day, demand for heating and cooling can be significant. Cooled air leaving a home essentially wastes the money spent to cool it. The same is true for air a homeowner has paid to warm.

R-value offers a way of measuring insulation's effectiveness (a higher R-value indicates more effective insulation). For example, on a 28-degree day, heat loss from a residence set at 68 degrees could hit 2,464 Btu per hour even through an 8 ft. x 10 ft. exterior wall packed with R-13 insulation. Reverse that situation on a scorching day—100 degrees outside—and heat gain indoors will still reach 2,464 BTU per hour.

To save money, set your thermostat five degrees closer (higher in summer, lower in winter) to the outdoor temperature, this simple change could result in a savings of 90 watts per hour of electricity, about 197 kilowatt-hours (kWh) in three months.

Keep blinds and drapes on the sunny side of your home closed in summer and open in winter. Find mysteriously "hot" or "cold" spots in the house and solve them by installing gasket seals around outlets and weather stripping along doors and windows, replacing old windows, and upgrading insulation. When practical, adjust landscaping to provide shade for your property in summer and sunlight in winter.

Weather doesn't have to play havoc with electricity bills. There are a variety of tools, appliances, and resources available to solve all sorts of energy challenges. Improvements such as new windows or a roof, require significant financing. But there are a lot of options that are inexpensive and simple enough to do yourself. Find more ways to save at [www.TogetherWeSave.com](http://www.TogetherWeSave.com).

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- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home. Place alarms inside each bedroom and outside each sleeping area. Test them once a month, change the batteries at least once a year, and replace the alarm itself every ten years.

These vital tips are featured in ESFI's newly launched "Home Fire Safety for Older Adults Safety Awareness Program," which provides tools to educate older adults and their families nationwide about home fire hazards related to cooking, heating, and electrical equipment. A full range of resources for older adults, including detailed fact and tip sheets as well as public service announcements, can be found by visiting [www.esfi.org/safetyeducators](http://www.esfi.org/safetyeducators).



*Pitt & Greene EMC will be closed Friday, March 25th in observance of Easter*

## **Cooperative News.....**

Each year employees and directors are recognized for their years of service to the cooperative.



Directors Bill Askew and James Shackelford each have 10 years of service with the cooperative.



Employees recognized were Greg Johnson, 15 years; Josh Holland, 10 years; Brandon Harper, 15 years; Donnie Johnson, 40 years; George Hathaway, 25 years.

*The 2016 Pitt & Greene calendar was mailed to each member in December. If you did not receive one in the mail, please call our office at 252-753-3128 and we will be glad to mail one to you.*

### **Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month**



Save energy and money by lowering your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. This will also slow mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

## **NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS**

***Please pay special attention to the amount due on your bill. Failure to pay the FULL AMOUNT without a special arrangement made prior to cut off day will result in disconnection and additional service charges. Don't get caught off guard.***

### **Co-op Office Hours Farmville**

Monday - Friday - 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
252-753-3128 or 1-800-622-1362

### **Snow Hill**

Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. 5:00 p.m.  
252-747-7600

### **POWER OUTAGES & EMERGENCIES**

During weekends, holidays and after office hours  
252-753-8778

De lunes a viernes de 8:00 a.m. a 5:00 p.m  
252-753-3128 ó 1-800-622-1362

### **Snow Hill**

De lunes a viernes  
De 8:00 a.m. a 5:00 p.m.  
252-747-7600

### **CORTES DE SUMINISTRO ELÉCTRICO Y EMERGENCIAS:**

Durante fines de semana, días festivos y después del horario de oficina  
252-753-8778