



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.
- * 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.

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.





Manager's Message

By: Mark A. Suggs

Understanding energy demand and purchasing

You may not think you need to have an understanding of energy demand and purchasing, but do you ever look at your energy bill and wonder what it all means? If your answer to that question is “yes,” then you might be interested to learn how demand impacts your utility bill.

To start, it is important to understand how electricity is made and how it is delivered to your home.

Before Pitt & Greene EMC can send electricity to your home, that electricity needs to be generated by a Generation and Transmission cooperative (G&T). Once the electricity has been generated, it travels over high-voltage transmission lines to substations, where the voltage is reduced to a safer level. The electricity then travels over distribution power lines and finds its way into your home. So, while you pay your bill to us – your electric distribution cooperative – we don't actually generate the electricity you use. That is the job of the G&T.

We do help to determine how much electricity our members need to power their homes and businesses, and you play a big part in determining how much electricity the G&T needs to create in order to keep the lights on in our community. That is where these terms “consumption” and “demand” come in.

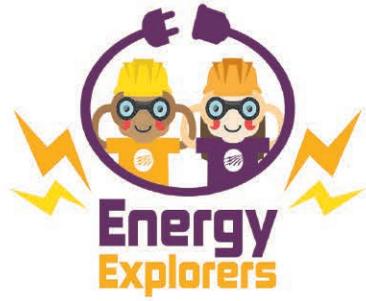
Consumption is measured in kilowatt hours (kWh). Demand is measured in kilowatts (kW). A lightbulb “consumes” a certain number of watts, let's say 100 watts per hour. If that lightbulb stays on for 10 hours, it “demands” a certain number of kilowatts (in this case, 1 kW) from the generation station producing electricity. Now, if you turn on 10, 100-watt lightbulbs in your home for one hour, you are still consuming the same number of kW. However, you are placing a demand on the utility to have those kW available to you over the course of one hour, instead of ten. This requires the generation and transmission plant to produce more power in less time in order to meet your demand.

Pitt & Greene EMC purchases kilowatt hours from the G&T based on the average demand of our members. Peak demand refers to the time of day when the demand for electricity is highest. This is typically during the evening when families return home from work or school, cook dinner and use appliances the most. Using electricity during this peak demand period often costs more to both Pitt & Greene EMC and to our members.

Demand is the reason your electricity bill fluctuates season to season and even year to year. Generating and distributing power can be a tricky and complicated business, but rest assured we will always meet the necessary demand to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity to your family.

ELECTRIFYING WORD SEARCH!

Can you find the words associated with electricity in the puzzle below?
Use the word bank if you need a hint!



Y R X B P O S T X K C G W A E
E T E U L X B I K W B A P G W
X B I W N P L U K L T B A L Z
A X I C O K U C V T K T H J L
E N E C I P B R S Q L A T P O
B P I Q H R C I S O L H J O E
M F A U R A T C V M U D E T E
W K X J L R R C I N Y G R Q M
I N B R S W U G E J J D S S R
J F E J I X X C E L M M W Z L
C U R R E N T T T F E X I L B
R X O P P P G S E R I W T I K
O M O B R A I Q O S Q E C A R
D Q T H C L L A L W B R H E Z
H T Z P H G G V V O C J I S S

Word Bank

ELECTRICITY

CIRCUIT

WATTS

CURRENT

WIRES

POWER

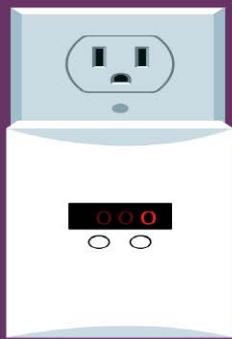
SWITCH

VOLTAGE

BULB

CHARGE





CARBON MONOXIDE SAFETY REMINDERS

- Install CO alarms on every floor of your home and outside each sleeping area.
- Test CO alarms monthly.
- Replace CO alarm batteries at least annually.
- Make sure your family knows the difference between CO and smoke alarm sounds.
- If your CO alarm sounds, immediately go outdoors.

Are you putting the lives of our linemen in danger?

Although seemingly innocent enough, putting any type of item on utility poles creates serious safety hazards. Staples, nails, and tacks used to hang signs, the signs themselves, as well as any other objects, pose dangers to Pitt & Greene EMC lineworkers who must climb poles when either restoring power following storms or while performing routine maintenance to ensure system reliability.

Posters, birdhouses, balloons, flags, basketball goals, signs, etc. create dangerous obstacles for lineworkers. The nails and tacks left behind can snag utility workers boots or puncture safety clothing, making lineworkers vulnerable to slipping or worse, electrocution.



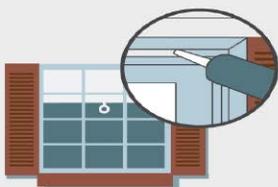
Colder weather has arrived, have you thought about what your heating system is set on? For example, if you have the thermostat set on 73, the system will come on more to keep it that desired temperature than if you have it set on a lower setting. The colder it is outside the more your heating system will run to keep your home warm. Which will make your utility bill higher. So when you receive your utility bill and it is higher than usual, remember the colder weather outside and what your thermostat was set on inside.



EASY WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY

WEATHERIZE

Seal doors and windows with caulk, weather stripping and/or plastic film.



SEAL IN WARMTH

Close blinds and curtains during the night to keep cold air out. Open them during the day to let sunlight in.



COOK UP SAVINGS

Use smaller appliances, like microwaves, toaster ovens and slow cookers when possible.



De lunes a viernes de 8:00 a.m. a 5:00 p.m.
252-753-3128 / 1-800-622-1362 / 252-747-7600

CORTES DE SUMINISTRO ELÉCTRICO Y EMERGENCIAS:

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

Co-op Office Hours

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POWER OUTAGES & EMERGENCIAS

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