



Tips for a safe and happy holiday season

The holidays are upon us. For many, that means more celebrations with friends and family, travel, decorations, cooking and shopping. Pitt & Greene EMC wants you to stay safe during the holidays, so here are a few tips to consider as you gear up for the season.

Inspect your seasonal items

Many of us have treasured holiday mementos that we bring out of storage and proudly display every year. The holidays are also a time when we dust off specialized cooking gadgets that allow us to prepare our favorite seasonal treats. These items are often handed down through generations and might lack modern safety features.

Take a few moments to carefully inspect all your holiday items to ensure everything is in safe, working order. A few things to look out for include:

- Brittle insulation on wires
- Rodent damage to wires
- Chafed or frayed wires, especially at stress points
- Worn switches with the potential to short circuit
- Corroded metal parts
- Broken legs, unstable bases and other tip-over hazards

Extension cords are temporary

When you asked your teacher for an extension on your term paper, it was a one-time thing, right? The same holds true for extension cords. They are designed for temporary use and should never be used as a permanent or long-term solution.

Never defeat safety devices

There are reasons why some devices have fuses, some plugs have three prongs instead of two and one prong is wider than the other on two-prong outlets. When those safety features get in the way of your grand holiday décor plans, you might be tempted to tamper with or defeat those features. Don't do it! If your plugs won't fit together, that means they're not designed to work together. Rather than tampering with a safety feature, find a safe solution.

Look up and live

When working outside with a ladder, be mindful of the location of overhead power lines. Always carry your ladder so that it is parallel to the ground. Before placing your ladder in an upright position, look around to ensure you are a safe distance from any power lines.

Beware of power lines through trees

Over time, tree branches can grow around power lines running along the street and to your home. If those branches come in contact with power lines, they can become energized, too. If your holiday plans call for stringing lights through trees, this can create a safety hazard. If you notice tree limbs that are too close to electric lines, contact Pitt & Greene EMC at 252.753.3128.



Manager's Message

By: Mark A. Suggs

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 bill 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 the 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.

Bright Ideas Winners for 2019-2020

Congratulations to Elizabeth Enni of Creekside Elementary, and Lori Moore of H.B. Sugg Elementary School. They were the recipients of the Bright Ideas Grant Program for the 2019-2020 school year. The Bright Ideas Grant Program is a statewide effort by North Carolina's twenty-seven Touchstone Energy electric cooperatives to provide additional classroom resources that cannot be met through existing school budgets. Any K-12 certified North Carolina teacher can apply for a grant up to \$2000.00.

Since 1984, North Carolina's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives have awarded more than \$11.5 million to North Carolina teachers for projects that have touched the lives of more than 2 million students in all subjects including math, reading, science and technology, history, music and the arts.

The application process will reopen for interested teachers in April 2020. In order to be considered for a Bright Idea Grant, the idea submitted by the teacher should be a unique and innovative way to reach the students and increase their interest in learning.

To find out more information about the Bright Idea Grant Program, visit www.ncbrightideas.com.



Mark Suggs with Elizabeth Enni, at Creekside Elementary



Mark Suggs with Lori Moore, Tiffany Leary, Daniella Scinton and Sterling Kirby at H.B. Sugg Elementary



Holiday Cooking Safety Tips

The kitchen is the heart of the home. Sadly, it's also where two out of every five home fires start. Many home fires occur during what's supposed to be the happiest time of the year – the holidays. Thanksgiving, Christmas and Christmas Eve hold a tradition of cooking, and safety should always be considered in the kitchen. As we embark on the holiday season, Pitt & Greene EMC and the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) urge you to use these simple safety tips to identify and correct potential kitchen hazards:

- * Never leave cooking equipment unattended, and always remember to turn off burners if you have to leave the room.
- * Supervise the little ones closely in the kitchen. Make sure children stay at least three feet away from all cooking appliances.
- * Prevent potential fires by making sure your stovetop and oven are clean and free of grease, dust and spilled food.
- * Remember to clean the exhaust hood and duct over your stove on a regular basis.
- * Keep the cooking area around the stove and oven clear of combustibles, such as towels, napkins and potholders.
- * Always wear short or close-fitting sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can catch fire.
- * To protect from spills and burns, use the back burners and turn the pot handles in, away from reaching hands.
- * Locate all appliances away from the sink.
- * Plug countertop appliances into ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI)-protected outlets.
- * Keep appliance cords away from hot surfaces like the range or toaster.
- * Unplug the toaster and other countertop appliances when not in use.

Pitt & Greene EMC will be closed Wednesday, January 1st
for New Year's and Monday, January 20th for
Martin Luther King Day.

Continued from Pg. 1

Stay away from your service connection

The overhead wire bringing power from the utility pole to your house is dangerous. You should treat this line the same way you'd treat any other power line on our system. Maintain a safe distance even if that means a small gap in the perfect gingerbread house outline of lights.

Read the fine print

If you take a few minutes to read and understand the specifications and limitations of your lights and other electrified holiday decorations, you can save yourself a great deal of work and frustration in the long run. For example, the tag at the end of an extension cord will tell you if it's rated for outdoor use, whether it will remain flexible in cold temperatures and how much energy it can safely handle. Similarly, holiday lights will tell you how many strings can be safely linked together.

Don't forget about the kids...and pets

If you have small children, you've probably spent a great deal of time making sure every square inch of your home is childproof. Every cabinet is locked and every outlet is covered. But sometimes the joy of celebrating the holidays with our little ones makes us a little less vigilant about electrical safety. Make sure your holiday décor receives the same level of safety scrutiny you apply to all of the permanent items in your home. Curious and mischievous pets can present similar challenges. Make sure Fluffy isn't nibbling on all those extra wires or using your tree as her personal back scratcher or jungle gym.

Reminder.....

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.

**Energy Efficiency
Tip of the Month**

Laundry Tip: Dry towels and heavier cottons separately from lighter clothing. You'll spend less time drying the lighter-weight items.

Source: energy.gov



Continued from Pg. 3

* Be sure to turn off all appliances when cooking is completed.

For more important safety tips to keep you and your family safe this holiday season and throughout the year, visit www.esfi.org.

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
Monday - Friday - 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
252-753-3128 / 1-800-622-1362 / 252-747-7600

POWER OUTAGES & EMERGENCIAS
During weekends, holidays and
after office hours
252-753-8778