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## A MESSAGE FOR YOU

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EVP and General Manager



## Please Make Room for Roadside Crews

When the power goes out, so do Pitt & Greene EMC's line crews. Lineworkers are the first to respond after an outage occurs, and they work tirelessly to restore power to the communities we serve.

If you're traveling and see one of our crews on the side of the road, we kindly ask that you move over if possible and give them a little extra space to work. We deeply care about the safety of all, and this extra precaution ensures just that.

If you approach a crew while traveling on a two-lane road, moving over to the next lane might not be an option. In this case, we simply ask that you slow down when approaching roadside crews. If you approach a crew while traveling on a four-lane road, and safety and traffic conditions allow, we ask that you move over into the far lane.

Utility crews aren't the only ones who could use the extra space. Emergency responders, such as police officers, firefighters and emergency medical technicians, often find themselves responding to emergency situations near busy roadways. We ask that you follow the same procedures mentioned above to help keep them safe as well.

There's plenty of room for all. Let's work together to keep everyone safe on our local roadways.

**MOVE OVER**

**Slow Down Move Over**  
when you see stopped electric utility vehicles

**It's the Law!**

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

A well-designed landscape can add beauty to your home and reduce home heating and cooling costs. Plant deciduous trees with high, spreading crowns to the south of your home to block sunlight in the summer and reduce the need for air conditioning. Deciduous trees lose their leaves in the winter, allowing sunlight to warm your home.

Plant evergreen trees and shrubs with low crowns to block winter winds. Dense evergreen trees and shrubs planted to the north and northwest are the most common type of windbreak and can help lower energy used for home heating.

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

## Teachers—It's Time to Submit Those Bright Ideas Applications

The Bright Ideas grant program is offered by all 26 of North Carolina's electric cooperatives and supports educators in need of funding to implement creative, hands-on learning projects in their classrooms.



Since 1994, North Carolina's electric co-ops have awarded more than \$15 million in Bright Ideas grants to teachers statewide. These projects have benefited well over 3.5 million North Carolina students.

Pitt & Greene EMC is now accepting applications for Bright Ideas education grants for the 2024–2025 school year. Teachers in K-12 classrooms with

innovative ideas are encouraged to apply for a grant up to \$2000.

Grant applications will be accepted April 1, through September 16, 2024. Teachers at qualifying schools can apply individually or as a team, and grants are available for all subjects. To apply, or for more information about the Bright Ideas grant program, visit [NCBrightIdeas.com](http://NCBrightIdeas.com).

## Generic Chargers Can Cause Serious Injury

People are always losing their phone chargers. As a solution, many people reach for the low-cost, generic plug-in USB chargers and charging cables found in the sea of impulse items that flank check-out lines. It can save money and it's so convenient, most people rationalize when making a purchase. Without much more thought, in the virtual cart or on the counter it goes.

Knockoffs can be great, but not when replacing your original phone charger, and for a variety of reasons.

"Although it is tempting to pick up an inexpensive phone charger to save money, buying and using cheap chargers is one place you might not want to cut corners," according to Erin Hollinshead, Executive Director of the Energy Education Council/Safe Electricity program. "Using an authentic replacement charger made by your mobile phone's manufacturer is always a better choice."

Along with a potential burn and fire hazard, using cheaply made charging components and devices can also cause shock and electrocution. Serious potential dangers aside, they may cost you more in the long run since they can cause damage to your phone, tablet or other electronic devices.

When using charging gear, Safe Electricity recommends the following:

- Do not leave items that are charging unattended.
- Always keep charging items away from flammable objects, especially bedding, and do not take them to bed with you. Tell kids and teens to NEVER place any charging device under their pillow. The heat generated gets trapped, which could cause the pillow or bed to catch fire.



- Do not touch charging electronic devices with wet hands or while standing in water.
- Make sure charging components are certified by a reputable third-party testing laboratory.
- Only buy product-approved chargers and cables (those made or certified by the manufacturer). Using cheaper devices can cause damage to the USB charge chip, which can have a lasting impact on how quickly and effectively your device charges in the future.
- Be on the lookout for fakes or imposters claiming to be brand approved. If the price seems too good to be true, it probably is.



# Thunderstorm Safety

Each year in the United States, more than 400 people are struck by lightning. On average, between 55 and 60 people are killed; hundreds of others suffer permanent neurological disabilities. Most of these tragedies can be avoided with a few simple precautions. When thunderstorms threaten, get to a safe place. Lightning safety is an inconvenience that can save your life.

All thunderstorms produce lightning and are dangerous. Lightning often strikes outside the area of heavy rain and may strike as far as 10 miles from any rainfall. Many lightning deaths occur ahead of storms or after storms have seemingly passed. Keep this simple fact in mind: if you can hear thunder, you are in danger. Also, don't be fooled by blue skies. There is no such thing as "heat lightning." All lightning comes as a result of a thunderstorm, and if you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to pose an immediate threat to you.

The most effective lightning safety action can be found in avoiding the lightning threat altogether. Have a lightning safety plan. If you have outdoor plans, know where you'll go for safety and how much time it will take to get there. Make sure your plan allows enough time to reach safety. Before going outdoors, check the forecast for thunderstorms. If thunderstorms are in the forecast, consider postponing activities to avoid being caught in a dangerous situation. Finally, when outdoors, monitor the weather and be sure to look for signs of a developing thunderstorm such as

darkening skies, flashes of lightning, or increasing wind. If you hear thunder, even a distant rumble, immediately activate your lightning safety plan and move to a safe place.

The following lightning safety tips could one day save your life:

- If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike you.
- When you hear thunder, immediately move to safe shelter. A safe shelter is an enclosed substantial building with electricity or plumbing, such as a home, office building, school, restaurant or a store. Sheds, tents, picnic pavilions, porches and ball-field dugouts DO NOT offer any lightning protection whatsoever and may actually increase your danger of being struck.
- If no substantial building is available for shelter, enclosed metal-topped vehicles offer protection from lightning, but make sure the windows are in the up position.
- Stay in your safe shelter for at least 30 minutes after you hear the last sound of thunder.

- When indoors, stay off-corded phones, computers and other electrical equipment that put you in direct contact with electricity. Avoid plumbing, including sinks, baths, and faucets. Stay away from windows and doors and stay off porches. Do not lie on concrete floors, and do not lean against concrete walls.

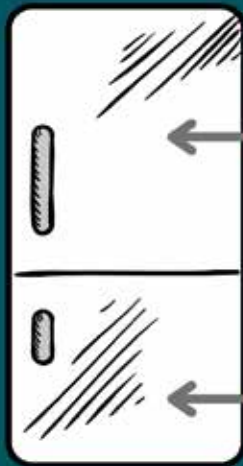
If you are caught outside with no safe shelter anywhere nearby, the following actions may reduce your risk:

- Immediately get off elevated areas such as hills, mountain ridges or peaks.
- Never lie flat on the ground.
- Never shelter under an isolated tree.
- Never use a cliff or rocky overhang for shelter.
- Immediately get out and away from ponds, lakes and other bodies of water.
- Stay away from objects that conduct electricity (barbed wire fences, power lines, etc.).



# Keep Food Safe During and After a Power Outage

Refrigerated or frozen foods may not be safe to eat after a power outage. Use these tips to minimize food loss and reduce risk of illness.



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Refrigerated food will last four hours. After four hours, place refrigerated foods in a cooler with ice.

24 OR 48

Food in a half-full freezer will last 24 hours. Food in a full freezer will last 48 hours.

## Food Safety Tips

1. Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
2. Throw out any food with an unusual odor, color or texture.
3. Throw out perishable food in your refrigerator after four hours without power or a cold source (like a cooler with ice).

When in doubt, throw it out!



## Home Safety: Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters VS Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters

The world of electricity is filled with acronyms and abbreviations—kW (kilowatt), AC (alternating current), and POV (peak operating voltage). GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupters) and AFCI (arc fault circuit interrupters) are also common electrical abbreviations. They both help protect your outlets from electrical accidents.

GFCIs help prevent burns, electric shocks, and electrocution. A GFCI has sensors that measure the current going in and out. Normally, the current is balanced. However, if the current is out of balance, something is wrong. The electric current has made contact with a human or somewhere else it should not

be. The GFCI senses this and instantly shuts down the circuit, stopping the flow of electricity. Since water is an electric conductor, GFCIs are important in areas where water and electricity could meet, such as bathrooms, kitchens, laundry rooms, and garages.

AFCIs help prevent electric fires. Electricity can leak out of damaged or decaying wires and start a fire. These fires spread quickly in the wiring behind walls. Electric fires cause more damage than some other types of fire and are twice as deadly. AFCIs sense electricity is leaking from the electric system and shuts electricity off before overheating happens.



GFCI VS AFCI

GFCIs prevent shocks, and AFCIs prevent fires. Both should be installed by a qualified electrician to make your home safer.



Published monthly by Pitt and Greene EMC

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