

PowerLines

A monthly publication for member/owners of Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative

May 2015

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Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International

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Stay in the know

The latest versions of our terms and conditions, bylaws, regulations, and rates are available on our website. To see them, please visit www.eiec.coop and click on "about us".

You can also "like" us on facebook to stay up to date with co-op news, events, and outage communication. Find us at www.facebook.com/easternillini.



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A Touchstone Energy®
Cooperative

Annual Meeting on June 11

Take ownership in your co-op by attending your annual meeting.

For the last several months, we've been talking about the seven cooperative principles that help guide Eastern Illini, as well as all other cooperatives. We're going to take a break from the co-op principles as we move towards our annual meeting.

On behalf of everyone at Eastern Illini, I'd like to personally invite you to join us on June 11 for our 27th Annual Meeting of Members. We look forward to gathering with you to catch up, hear what you have to say and enjoy some good food and fellowship.

We are happy to again offer an attendance credit of \$25 for member/owners that attend and register. We'll also provide a fried-chicken dinner, plenty of snacks, tons of games and activities for children, and engaging seminars on a wide variety of topics.

This event is not only a chance for us to visit with member/owners like you, it's also a great opportunity for you to learn about our programs and get to know your co-op employees.

This is an occasion to discuss and learn more about the issues affecting our local communities. It's also an opportunity for you to exercise one of the greatest benefits of being a member of an electric co-op, by voting for your board of directors.

Eastern Illini is not owned by far away investors, and it is not run by an appointed board of directors. We

are run by a democratically elected, local board of directors – a board who is given the privilege to serve because of your vote.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our directors are members of your community. They are concerned with the issues you face every day because they face them too. And don't forget – all members of Eastern Illini are eligible to run for the board – that includes you!

We all vote for our state and federal Congressional representatives, but not every American has the right to vote for those who will represent community interests within their electric utility. You have that right, so why not exercise it?

Rest assured, no matter what happens, we remain dedicated to providing you with safe, reliable and affordable electric service, but we encourage you to take part in helping us improve how we deliver that service. So make it a point to join us on June 11 at your annual meeting. We promise we will make it worth your while!

Sincerely,

Bob Hunzinger

May is Electrical Safety Month

In honor of Electrical Safety Month, we would like to offer 31 tips to help keep you safe.

Tip 1: Little ones should always ask an adult for help when plugging or removing cords from an outlet.

Tip 2: Bulb wattage matters! Light bulbs with wattages that are too high for the light fixture can overheat the fixture, causing a fire hazard. (ESFI)

Tip 3: Do you have little ones in the home? Make sure your loved ones are protected by installing tamper-resistant receptacles. (Occupational Safety and Health Admin)

Tip 4: Surge protectors for cable and phone jacks provide protection for your computer modem, TV and phone. (ESFI)

Tip 5: Entertainment centers and computer equipment are pricey items for the home! Make sure to leave plenty of space around these items for proper ventilation. (OSHA)

Tip 6: Working outdoors? Play it safe and use a wooden or fiberglass ladder. Remember to keep a minimum of 10 feet between the ladder and power lines. (National Fire Protection Association)

Tip 7: NEVER touch anyone or anything that's in contact with a downed power line! Power lines may be live, so it's best to stay a safe distance away. (NFPA)

Tip 8: Smoke detectors in your home should be tested every month to ensure they are properly working. (ESFI)

Tip 9: Never place extension cords in high traffic areas, under carpets or across walkways, where they pose a potential tripping hazard. (OSHA)

Tip 10: Using a window A/C unit? Before installation, make sure the electrical circuit and the outlet are able to handle the load. Large units should have their own separate electrical circuit so the system is not overloaded.

Tip 11: When you're cooking up a storm in the kitchen, remember to set a timer to remind yourself to check on food that is simmering or in the oven. Always double check to make sure burners and appliances are turned off when you're done. (ESFI)



Smoke detectors in your home should be tested every month to ensure they are properly working.

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International

Tip 13: Smoke detectors should be installed in every bedroom, outside of each sleeping area and on every level of your home. (ESFI)

Tip 14: If you're working outdoors in a damp location, inspect all electrical cords and equipment being used. Make sure they are in good condition and free of defects – and remember to use a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). (OSHA)

Tip 15: Recurring tripped circuit breakers or multiple blown fuses? This can signify a serious and dangerous electrical problem! Contact a licensed electrician immediately.

Tip 16: Lamps are great accents for our homes – make sure to place them on level surfaces, away from items that are flammable. (NFPA)

Tip 17: Flickering or dimming lights? This could mean bigger problems ahead. Contact a qualified electrician to check your home's wiring.

Tip 18: Frayed or damaged extension cords are dangerous and should never be used. Damage to the cord can expose wires and cause fire and shock hazards.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIP



Working outdoors? Play it safe and use a wooden or fiberglass ladder. Remember to keep a minimum of 10 feet between the ladder and power lines.

Source: National Fire Protection Association

Tip 12: How well do you know your home's electrical system? Make a map showing which fuse or circuit breaker controls each switch, light or outlet. (ESFI)

Electrical Safety Month, cont.

Tip 19: Do you have a wobbling ceiling fan? This can wear out the fan's motor over time. Turn off the fan and tighten the screws to correct the problem.

Tip 20: Power strips are great – but relying on them too much can be a problem! You may need to install more outlets in your home. Call a qualified electrician for help. (ESFI)

Tip 21: Any time you see an overhead power line – you should assume the line is energized, even if the wire is down or appears to be insulated.

Tip 22: For outdoor equipment, use lighting and power tools that have the label of an independent test laboratory, and make sure they're made for outdoor use. (NFPA)

Tip 23: Flying a kite is great for outdoor fun! But remember to always be mindful of overhead power lines. (Safe Electricity)

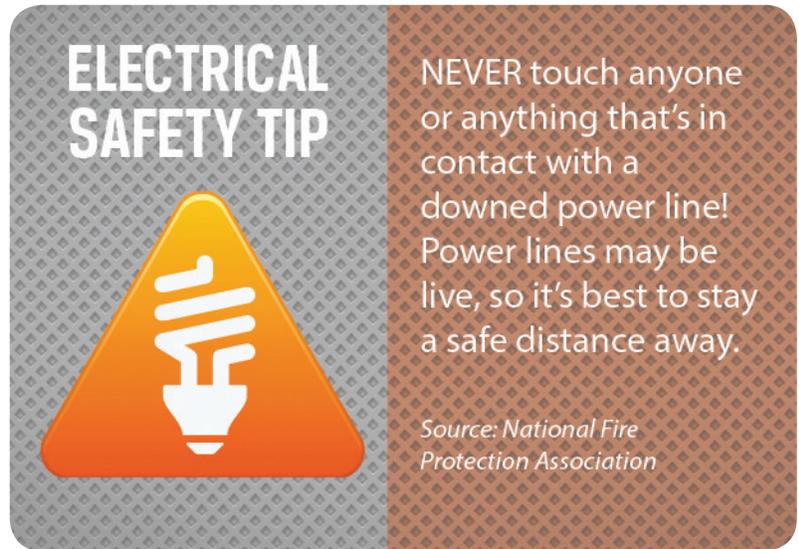
Tip 24: Never throw water on an electrical fire! This may seem obvious, but in the heat of the moment, grabbing a bucket of water to extinguish the fire can be tempting. Use your chemical fire extinguisher instead. (Popular Mechanics)

Tip 25: Install light bulbs with extended lifespans in hard-to-reach locations to limit the number of times you have to climb a ladder, move furniture or otherwise engage in potentially dangerous activities. (ESFI)

Tip 26: Remember: Power strips and surge suppressors do not provide more power to a location, only more access to the same limited capacity of the circuit into which it is connected. (ESFI)

Tip 27: All switches and lighting equipment should bear the mark of a nationally recognized testing laboratory such as UL, Intertek, or CSA. (ESFI)

Tip 28: When cooking in the kitchen, remember to keep appliance cords away from hot surfaces like the oven, stove or toaster. (ESFI)



ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIP

NEVER touch anyone or anything that's in contact with a downed power line! Power lines may be live, so it's best to stay a safe distance away.

Source: National Fire Protection Association

The graphic features a yellow and orange triangular warning sign with a white lightbulb icon inside. The background is a dark grey grid pattern.

Tip 29: DIY project for the home? Always turn off the power to the circuit that you plan to work on by switching off the circuit breaker in the main service panel.

Tip 30: Use covers on outdoor power outlets, especially near swimming pools. Keep cords and electrical devices away from the water, and never handle electrical items before you've dried off. (ESFI)

Tip 31: When using a portable generator, make sure the extension cords used are rated for the load, are free of cuts or frays and have three-pronged plugs. (ESFI)

May is National Electrical Safety Month

We're committed to electrical safety excellence – for our members and employees.



Is it time to switch to LED lighting?

LED lighting is available, but is it the right time to transition to using them in your home?

Just as you upgraded your TV/cable and phone from an analog system to digital for better sound and picture quality, the lighting industry has been modernizing its options and products in order to offer consumers greater energy efficiency.

For the past several years, traditional incandescent bulbs have been phased out in favor of halogen and compact fluorescent (CFL) lights that offer greater efficiency. Even more recent innovations in technology have focused on Light Emitting Diode light sources, or LED bulbs, which are essentially digital light.

Longevity and efficiency in one
Known for their longevity and efficiency, LED lights have an estimated operational life span of up to 50,000 hours. This equates to 17 years of continuous operation, or 34 years of 50 percent operation. So if you were to use an LED fixture for eight hours per day, it would take approximately 51 years before it would need to be replaced.

Unlike fluorescent lights that require a few minutes to warm up before reaching their full level of brightness, LEDs achieve full illumination immediately.

The cost of older lights
If you are still hanging on to your traditional or “analog” era lighting, your light bulb is operating at only 20 percent energy efficiency. Eighty

LED Lifetime Characteristics

Compare and contrast the lifespan and power consumption for the available light bulb options.

**Source: energy.gov*

				
	Incandescent	LED	CFL	Halogen
Lifespan (hours)	750-2,000	35,000-50,000	8,000-10,000	3,000-4,000
Power Consumption	100 W	16-20 W	23-26 W	70-72 W
	75 W	9-13 W	18-20 W	53 W
	60 W	12 W	13-15 W	43 W
	40 W	8-9 W	10-11 W	28-29 W

percent of the electricity from the “analog” bulb is lost as heat. To illustrate how this inefficiency impacts your wallet, consider this. If you have traditional lighting and your electric bill is \$100, then you are spending \$80 to heat the room instead of light it. Using LED illumination with 80 percent efficiency, your electricity cost would be approximately \$20, saving you about \$80.

Ideal for outdoor use

LEDs are ideal for outdoor use because of their durability. LED lights are resistant to vibrations, shock and external impacts such as exposure to weather, wind and rain. In addition, they are temperature resistant and operate in colder outdoor temperatures. In contrast, colder temperatures may affect operation of fluorescent lamps. LEDs can also be dimmed, allowing maximum flexibility in usage.

Don't be fooled

When purchasing an LED light, look for the Energy Star label to ensure

you have a genuine product, as there are poor quality LED products in the marketplace. Some of these products are manufactured outside of the U.S. with components that produce low light levels, don't stand up on long service life, or have exaggerated energy saving claims.

So like any other purchase, research before you buy! Visit energystar.gov for more information about Energy Star LED lights.

While it is true that LEDs generally cost more to purchase than fluorescent and incandescent lights, they are much less expensive to operate over time. LEDs are energy efficient so the replacement and maintenance requirements are dramatically lower.

In addition, as with other electronics, prices are expected to come down as more products enter the market. Make the switch from analog to digital, and you will see an increase in your home energy efficiency and a decrease in your energy costs.

Staying safe - during and after a storm

Helping you stay safe during and after summer storms is a big concern for us.

No one knows electrical safety better than the experts who practice it every single day. Eastern Illini encourages you to always think safety first when it comes to electricity. The following reminders are designed to help you stay safe during and after a summer storm.

Avoid wires and water

When lightning strikes a home during a storm, the electrical charge can surge through pipes and utility wires. That means you can get zapped if you're touching water or any device that's plugged in, whether it's a landline phone or a toaster.

Skip the makeshift shelter

During a storm, it's tempting to take cover under a picnic gazebo or golf cart, but in open-sided structures with no conductors to channel strikes, a bolt's path of least resistance to the ground could be you. On top of that, these structures raise your risk of a lightning strike

because of their height. Keep moving toward suitable shelter.

Portable generators

Take special care with portable generators, which can provide a good source of power, but if improperly installed or operated, can become deadly.

Do not connect generators directly to household wiring.

Power from generators can back-feed along power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including Eastern Illini's linemen making repairs.

It's best to hire a qualified, licensed electrician to install your generator and ensure that it meets local electrical codes.

Flooded areas

Stay away from downed power lines and avoid walking through flooded areas. Power lines could be submerged and still be live with electricity.



**Providing value
for your
electric dollar**

Have you noticed the black bands on some of our electric poles? Those plastic strips are designed to keep animals from climbing the poles so they don't knock out your power and cause the need for expensive repairs.

This is one more simple way that we are looking out for you - and your wallet!

Report any downed lines you see by calling 800-824-5102 immediately.

Electrical equipment

Never use electrical equipment that is wet – especially outdoor electrical equipment, which could be a potential danger after a summer storm. Water can damage electrical equipment, posing a shock or fire hazard.

For a checklist to assess safety hazards around your home or to take a quick safety quiz, go to www.togetherwesave.com/power-of-community/safety.

Summer Storm Safety Tip

Strong summer storms can create dangerous situations. Always avoid downed power lines - the wire could be live, which could be deadly for those nearby. Quickly report downed power lines to your local electric cooperative.



It's all about YOU!

YOU can earn a \$25 attendance credit

YOU can feast on wonderful food

**YOU can let the kids (and grandkids)
enjoy games and activities**

YOU can vote for your directors

**YOU can increase your knowledge by
attending engaging seminars**

At Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, we are owned by YOU, our member/owners. Because of that, we have a simple goal: to provide YOU with safe and reliable electric service.

**Please join us at YOUR annual meeting
June 11 in Paxton
Paxton-Buckley-Loda High School
Registration begins at 3 p.m.**