



76 Years of Providing High Quality, Reliable Electric Service to Members in Sierra County, and areas of Luna, Socorro, and Catron Counties

I never think of the future - it comes soon enough. ~ Albert Einstein

Electrical Safety—Overloading Systems and Upgrades

Have you ever noticed your lights flicker, blink or dim momentarily? Are you experiencing trips or blown fuses on your circuit breaker? Are appliance cords or wall outlet plates warm to the touch or discolored? Do you ever hear crackling, sizzling or buzzing from your outlets? Are you receiving shocks from an electrical appliance, outlet or wall switch?

These are all warning signs that your electrical circuits may be overloaded. Or, your home or business may have faulty equipment or wiring that could result in personal injury or fire. If you are aware of any of these conditions, it is important to have your home electrical system inspected by a professional electrician.

Residential electrical wiring changed during the 20th century as new appliances appeared on the scene. Since a third of American homes were built more than 50 years ago, home buyers and folks living in older homes should be aware that electric capacity is a major concern with older wiring systems.

When too much current gets drawn, wires heat up, baking and eventually weakening the insulation. Wires with damaged, decayed, or brittle insulation can lead to shocks and fires.

Not only are overloaded electrical circuits hazardous in your home or business, they can also lead to overload on the Cooperative's equipment, leading to costly repairs of damaged equipment or even outages.

Transmission lines connect to substations brimming with transformers and other control gear. Here is where the transformers step down the voltage to safer, more manageable levels. Depending upon the distance involved to the furthest member and the amount of load served, distribution voltages can range from 7,200 to 24,900 volts. A couple more step-downs and the electricity arrives at your home at 240 volts. Transformers can range in size based on the peak kWh used on the services connected to it.

Overload is when a transformer is subjected to voltages and/or currents that exceed its design specifications. During overloading conditions, excess heat will cause the insulation system to breakdown, resulting in decreased life expectancy of the transformer.

Most often, overload on a transformer is caused by adding or upgrading electrical equipment at a home or business without notifying the Cooperative of the planned changes. Prior to the installation or upgrade of electrical equipment, such as central air conditioners, please call the Cooperative and make us aware so the line crew can make sure the transformer that serves your home or business is able to handle the increased load. Your neighbors will thank you too—many transformers serve multiple homes—so changes you are making could be affecting your neighbors without your knowledge.

While the line crew works hard to maintain Cooperative equipment, we appreciate it when members show us their "Cooperative Spirit" by communicating with us on their planned upgrades or if they are experiencing any of the warning signs of an overloaded system. Our goal is to provide safe, reliable electric to our members twenty-four hours a day.



SEC Office is Closed for Labor Day Monday September 4th

Harvest Workers Urged to Take Time to Reap Safe Harvest

It can be an exciting and exhausting time, the culmination of a season of hard work. However, the rush to harvest can also yield tragic outcomes. Each year, dozens of farm workers are killed and hundreds are injured in accidents involving power lines and electrical equipment.

"Things people see every day can fade from view and in the busy-ness of harvest time, it's easy for farm workers to forget about the power lines overhead," says Richard McCracken of the Safe Electricity Advisory Board. "But failure to notice them can be a deadly oversight." Review with all workers the farm activities that take place around power lines. Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance. Keep equipment at least 10 feet away from power lines – above, below and to the side – a 360-degree rule.

"Always lower grain augers before moving them, even if it's only a few feet," says Bob Aherin, PhD, CSP & University of Illinois Professor and Agricultural Safety & Health Program Leader. "Variables like wind, uneven ground, shifting weight or other conditions can combine to create an unexpected result Also use extreme caution when raising the bed of a grain truck."

Farm workers should take these steps to ensure a safer harvest season:

- Use care when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines. Do not let the spotter touch the machinery while it is being moved anywhere near power lines.
- As with any outdoor work, be careful not to raise any equipment such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, ropes and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust and dirt contamination.
- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path!
- Don't use metal poles to break up bridged grain inside bins. Know where and how to shut off the power in an emergency.
- Use qualified electricians for work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.

Operators of farm equipment or vehicles must also know what to do if the vehicle comes in contact with a power line: Stay on the equipment, warn others to stay away and call 911. Do not get off the equipment until the utility crew says it is safe to do so.

"If the power line is energized and you step outside, touching the vehicle and ground, your body becomes the path and electrocution is the result," Aherin said. "Even if a power line has landed on the ground, the potential for the area nearby to be energized still exists. Stay inside the vehicle unless there's fire or imminent risk of fire."

If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together, without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

Once you get away from the equipment, never attempt to get back on or even touch the equipment. Some electrocutions have occurred after the operator dismounts and, realizing nothing has happened, tries to get back on the equipment.

It is very important that all farm workers and seasonal employees are informed of electrical hazards and trained in proper procedures to avoid injury.

For more information on farm electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org (Spanish versions of this information are also available on the website).

Safe Electricity is the safety outreach program of the Energy Education Council, a non-profit organization with more than 400 electric cooperative members and many others who share the mission of creating a safer, smarter world.

Winter Moratorium Protection

Protection from winter shut-off begins November 15, 2017. To avoid potential disconnection of services, please contact the Human Services Department for eligibility information for the Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) at 1-800-283-4465. Your service will not be disconnected from November 15, 2017 through March 15, 2018 if you qualify for LIHEAP and you remain current on any payments that you owe under a payment plan, or you have no past due amounts as of November 15, 2017. For more information call the Human Services Department at 1-800-283-4465.



El 15 de Noviembre del 2017 empezara la protección de desconexión del invierno. Para prevenir una posible desconexión de servicios, por favor de contactar al Departamento de Servicios Humanos para información sobre elegibilidad para el programa de bajos recursos de energía, (LIHEAP) al 1-800-283-4465. Su servicios no serán desconectados durante el 15 de Noviembre 2017 hasta el 15 de Marzo del 2018 si usted califica para el programa de bajos recursos de energía, (LIHEAP) y si usted continua al corriente en los pagos que usted deba bajo un plan de pago, o hasta el 15 de Noviembre del 2017 y no tenga ningún pago atrasado. Para información en español llame al Departamento de Servicios Humanos, 1-800-283-4465.

