



# news & views

from Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## TIPS FOR A SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON

By Justin LaBerge

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

We can't guarantee that the hustle and bustle of the season won't leave you with a few frayed nerves, but we can certainly help you avoid frayed wires.

### 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 stitches 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 decor 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 Lincoln Electric at 406-889-3301.

### 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. If you must perform work close to your service entrance, contact Lincoln Electric.

### 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



er 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 decor 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.

Justin LaBerge writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

LINCOLN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

# Guest Column: Co-ops Push for Common-Sense Replacement Rule in Place of CPP

With all the policy changes happening in government, this month I would like to share an article written by Dan Riedinger. Dan Riedinger writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

Though this information was current as of publication, politics are constantly in motion. For updated information, check out NRECA's website

"In October, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced plans to repeal the Clean Power Plan, a regulation that would have increased costs and impacted many electric cooperatives across the nation. Now the EPA, informed by public comment,

must work to develop a common-sense replacement plan.

Lincoln Electric is glad to see the rule go. We're working with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), our national trade association, to encourage the EPA to replace the rule with a plan that focuses on individual power plants. We hope the agency will craft a replacement rule to address power plant emissions legally, provide co-ops with the certainty and flexibility they need to meet their members' needs, and support co-ops in their mission to provide affordable and reliable electricity.

Electric co-ops depend on a diverse fuel mix to meet the energy needs of 42 million members across the nation, protect reliability of the energy system and ensure affordable power. The

diverse fuel mix allows co-ops to respond to local and regional factors and member preferences while ensuring affordable and reliable power. Past federal policy pushed cooperatives away from natural gas use for electricity to developing coal-based electric generation. In many cases, co-op members are still paying for those facilities—and the roughly \$12 billion in pollution control measures that were added to them since the early 1990s.

But as it turns out, electric co-ops and other utilities are already making significant changes in how they generate power. Co-ops and their members value a healthy environment and vibrant rural communities. Market forces and members' interests are driving co-ops to further diversify their electric generation portfolios. As a result, co-op-owned coal-fired generation has dropped 9 percent since 2014, and co-op solar capacity has increased five times in just the past two years.

We live in a carbon constrained

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**Manager's Notes**  
by Ray Ellis

## News & Views

*Published monthly by Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.*

Lincoln Electric's Board of Trustees hold regular meetings monthly at the Eureka office. These are typically scheduled on the third Monday of each month at 7 pm. All members are encouraged to attend. If you have any items of interest, please contact the general manager prior to the meeting.

### Next Meeting Date:

**Monday, December 18, 2017**

### Board of Trustees

- **Mike Workman** - President, Dist. 5, Koochanusa Shores-Pinkham
- **Wesly Loughman** - Vice President, Dist. 4, Eureka-Tobacco Plains
- **Courtney Pluid** - Secretary, Dist. 3, Fortine-Glen Lake
- **Myra Appel** - Dist. 1, Flathead
- **Joel Graves** - Dist. 5, Koochanusa Shores-Pinkham
- **Marianne Roose** - Dist. 3 - Fortine-Glen Lake
- **Tina Taurman** - Dist. 2, Trego-Stryker
- **Ethel White** - Dist. 4 - Eureka-Tobacco Plains
- **Open Seat** - Dist. 4 - Eureka-Tobacco Plains
- **Open Seat** - Dist. 1, Flathead

### General Manager Ray Ellis

**In case of power outage:  
Always call 406-889-3301**

312 Osloski Road  
PO Box 628  
Eureka, MT 59917

www.lincolnelectric.coop  
info@lincolnelectric.coop

fact is that no two electric co-ops are exactly alike. The nation's 900 electric co-ops rely on a diverse fuel mix to meet members' energy needs, maintain reliability and ensure affordability. Each one makes strategic long-term investments in energy sources that make the most sense for them. Any new regulation needs to account for this reality.

This flexibility to pursue a

## BUSINESS AND BOARDROOM BRIEFS

The regular meeting of the board of trustees was conducted on October 16, 2017. A quorum of trustees was not present so no actions were taken.

|                                     | Year to Date<br>09/30/2017 | Year to Date<br>09/30/2016 |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Year to Date kWh Sales              | 85,479,818                 | 73,236,194                 |
| Year to Date Revenue                | \$ 7,725,449               | \$ 6,946,089               |
| Year to Date Cost of Power          | \$ 3,760,266               | \$ 3,283,450               |
| Year to Date Operating Exp          | \$ 3,906,829               | \$ 3,644,757               |
| Year to Date Margins                | \$ 142,949                 | \$ 77,794                  |
| Number of Members                   | 4,539                      | 4,479                      |
| Number of Meters                    | 5,881                      | 5,784                      |
| Miles of Line                       | 957                        | 953                        |
| Total Utility Plant                 | \$ 32,428,794              | \$ 32,980,631              |
| Member Equity                       | \$ 8,944,377               | \$ 8,734,888               |
| Sept. Average Residential Use (kWh) | 826                        | 806                        |
| Sept. Average Residential Billing   | \$94.81                    | \$93.37                    |

## Replacement

*Continued from page 5*

world and electric co-ops are reducing their carbon footprint. In fact, since 2005, co-ops have increased electric generation by 15 million megawatt-hours while reducing carbon dioxide emissions by nearly 10 percent.

Given the progress happening without the Clean Power Plan, you may ask why we want the EPA to go back to the drawing board to come up with a replace-

ment rule. The main reason is certainty. A workable, common-sense rule that adheres to the law clarifies the rules of the road for co-ops, which will then be better able to make smart, long-term investments in electric generation. Regulatory certainty is an essential ingredient in ensuring a reliable supply of affordable power.

Co-ops are looking forward to working with the EPA on a plan that gets it right this time around."



## MECA Memorial Scholarships Available

- Four \$500 scholarships will be awarded to students of MECA electric cooperative members
  - Student must be attending college Fall 2017
- Student's parent or guardian must be a member of Lincoln Electric

### Applications Available:

- Lincoln Electric's office at 312 Osloski Road in Eureka
  - Online at [www.lincolnelectric.coop](http://www.lincolnelectric.coop)
  - Your school's guidance counselor's office

**Applications Due to  
Lincoln Electric by  
January 31, 2018**



# Look Out for Scams

*By Meaghan Evans*

Unfortunately, in today's world, scams are inevitable. Scammers can threaten you with everything from legal action involving the IRS to turning off power to your home.

Utility scams often involve an individual or group posing as an employee of your electric cooperative. The scammer may use threatening language in order to frighten you into offering your credit card or bank account information. Don't fall victim to these types of scams. Understand the threats posed and your best course of action:

If someone calls your home or cell phone demanding you pay your electric bill immediately, gather as much information as you can from that individual, hang-up the phone and contact the local authorities. Scammers often use threats and urgency to pressure you into giving them

your bank account number or loading a pre-paid credit or debit card (such as a Green Dot card).

Lincoln Electric will never ask you to offer up personal finance information over the phone. If you have any doubts about your utility bill, contact our member payment center either in person, or over the phone at 889-3301.

If someone comes to your home claiming to be an employee of Lincoln Electric that needs to collect money or inspect parts of your property, call us to verify they are, in fact, an employee. If they are not, call local authorities for assistance and do not let the individual into your home.

There are other types of scams consumers should watch out for:

Government agencies like the IRS will never call to inform you that you have unpaid taxes or other liens against you. You will always receive this type of informa-

tion in the mail. If someone calls claiming to be the IRS, hang-up immediately.

If you receive an email from an unknown sender; an email riddled with spelling errors and typos; or an email threatening action unless a sum of money is paid, do not click any links provided within the email, and do not respond to the email. Simply delete the email, or send it to your spam folder.

If someone calls your home claiming to have discovered a virus on your computer, hang-up. This caller's intent is to access personal information you may be keeping on your computer.

Lincoln Electric wants to make sure you avoid any and all types of scams that could put you or your financial information in

jeopardy. If you have any questions or would like more information about how you can protect yourself from scammers, call us at 889-3301 or visit our website at [www.lincolnelectric.coop](http://www.lincolnelectric.coop).

*Meaghan Evans writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*



# Space Heater Safety Tips

Space heaters are a great way to warm specific rooms in your home without having to crank up the thermostat, but using space heaters doesn't come without risk! Use the tips below to keep your home safe.

**DO:** Plug your space heater directly into the wall outlet.

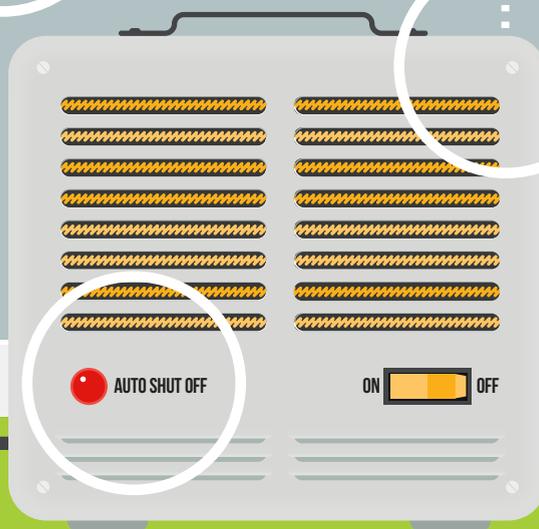


**DO:** Keep your space heater in low-moisture rooms.

**DO:** Keep your space heater at a safe distance (at least 3 feet) from kids, pets and flammable items.



**DO:** Buy a unit with an automatic shutoff in case the unit tips over, or you forget to shut it off.



**DO:** Always follow the directions and take a broken space heater to a qualified appliance service center.

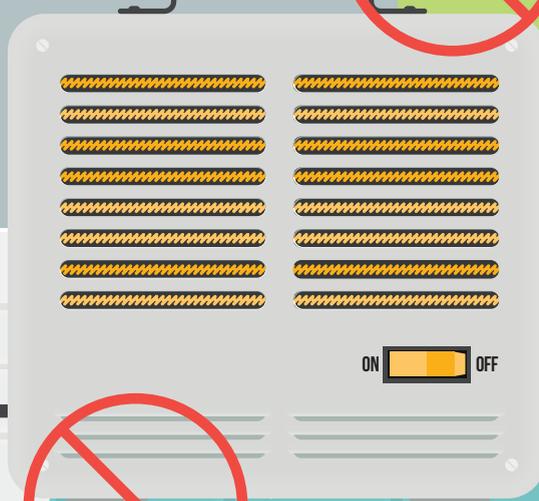


**DON'T:** Leave your space heater unattended. Always unplug it before you leave the house or go to bed.

**DON'T:** Place your space heater near curtains, clothing, furniture or bedding.

**DON'T:** Use an extension cord to plug in your space heater. It can cause the heater to over-heat, and can be a tripping hazard.

**DON'T:** Try to repair a broken space heater yourself.



**DON'T:** Put your space heater in your bathroom. The moisture can damage the unit, which could cause it to malfunction.

