



PREPARE YOUR HOME, YARD FOR WILDFIRE

Tips, suggestions to mitigate your wildfire risk

In 2024, more than 2,000 wildfires burned approximately 388,000 acres of land in Montana, according to the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC). An estimated 700 fires were sparked by lightning, while approximately 1,300 were human-caused, according to the Northern Rockies Coordination Center. As acres burn, homes and outbuildings inevitably do as well. The good news

is that there are ways to mitigate fire threats to your home while still enjoying the forested landscapes we all love here in rural northwest Montana.

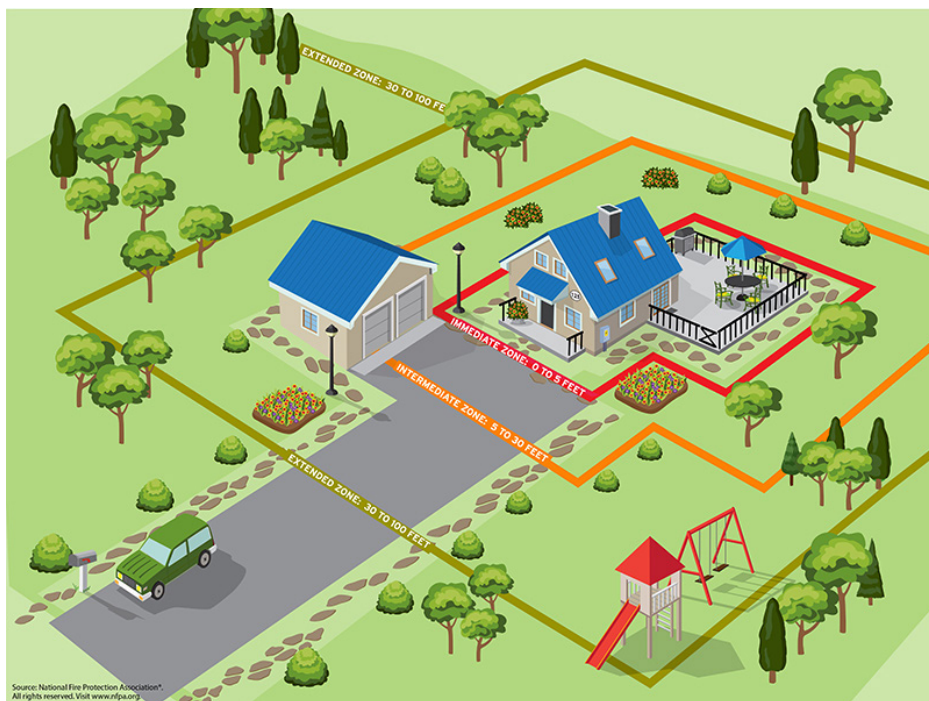
With spring here and summer just around the corner, you may already be planning to work on your landscaping or considering upgrades and changes. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) offers excellent resources and tips to help prepare your home for

wildfire threats.

According to the NFPA, the primary threats to homes from wildfires come from embers and small flames. Embers can travel from a wildfire and be carried by the wind for more than a mile, causing spot fires and igniting homes, outbuildings and other structures.

The NFPA has conducted experiments, post-fire studies and modeling to demonstrate that homes ignite due to vegetation and conditions surrounding them, up to 200 feet from the foundation. This area is called the **Home Ignition Zone (HIZ)**. Developed by U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service fire scientist Jack Cohen, the HIZ is divided into three zones: the Immediate Zone, the Intermediate Zone and the Extended Zone.

Home Ignition Zones



Source: National Fire Protection Association®. All rights reserved. Visit www.nfpa.org

Immediate Zone (0–5 feet from the home)

This zone extends from the furthest attached exterior point of the home, such as a deck, patio, roof eave or siding. It is the most critical area to address since it is the most vulnerable to embers. When preparing this zone, start with the home itself and then work outward. Take the following

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FINANCIAL OVERVIEW	YEAR TO DATE JAN. 2025	YEAR TO DATE JAN. 2024
KWh SALES	18,300,735	19,612,761
REVENUE	\$1,700,479	\$1,656,069
COST OF POWER	\$819,909	\$993,738
OPERATING EXPENSE	\$544,366	\$440,805
MARGINS	\$185,253	\$114,038
NUMBER OF MEMBERS	5,308	5,220
NUMBER OF METERS	6,723	6,530
MILES OF LINE	1,023	1,014
TOTAL UTILITY PLANT	\$40,261,319	\$39,262,478
MEMBER EQUITY	\$15,942,526	\$14,860,394
JANUARY AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL USE (KWH)	2,409	2,649
JANUARY AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL BILLING	\$219.69	\$218.05

KEY REMINDERS

- **THE ANNUAL MEETING** is on Saturday, April 12 at Lincoln County High School in Eureka. Registration starts at 8 a.m., business starts at 9 a.m.
- Do you have any digging projects this spring? Make sure to call Montana 811 before you dig to locate underground utilities. Call 811 or visit www.Montana811.org for more info.
- Questions about electrical lines and right-of-way? Call us at 406-889-3301 to discuss.
- Make sure to keep your contact information up to date. If you have an updated phone number or email, please contact our main office to update it.

BUSINESS AND BOARDROOM BRIEFS

The regular meeting of the board of trustees was conducted on February 18. All trustees were present, and the board took the following action:

- Approved the absence of Tina Taurman and Rodney Kane.
- Approved the BKI/Vantage Point Wildfire Mitigation contract.
- Approve trustee attendance at 2025 Western Montana Managers' meetings.
- Approved Marianne Roose, Tina Taurman, Sandi Mason and Myra Appel to attend the CFC Forum in New York in June.
- Approved Tina Taurman to attend the NRECA Legislative Conference.
- Approved the donation request of \$200 for Feed Eureka.
- Approved the donation of (2) \$50 energy certificates for the Tobacco Valley Friends of the NRA.



FIND AND FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM under Lincoln Electric Cooperative, to stay up to date on breaking news, LEC events, promotions and local news.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE at

www.lincolnelectric.coop for information on member services, billing, outages and safety, job postings, energy efficiency, community and general cooperative updates.

LINCOLN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

CONTACT

1-406-889-3301
info@lincolnelectric.coop
www.lincolnelectric.coop
 Secure Payments: 1-833-890-6258

ALWAYS REPORT OUTAGES TO:

1-406-889-3301

OFFICE

312 Osloski Road
 PO BOX 628
 Eureka, Montana 59917

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday
 7:00 AM - 5:30 PM

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Tina Taurman
 President

Joel Graves
 Vice President

Sandi Mason
 Secretary-Treasurer

Myra Appel
Rodney Kane
Rick Peterson
David Purdy
Marianne Roose

Matthew Quinn
 General Manager

Lincoln Electric's Board of Trustees holds regular monthly meetings at the boardroom in the cooperative office. These are typically scheduled on the third Monday of each month at 4 p.m. 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, APRIL 21, 2025



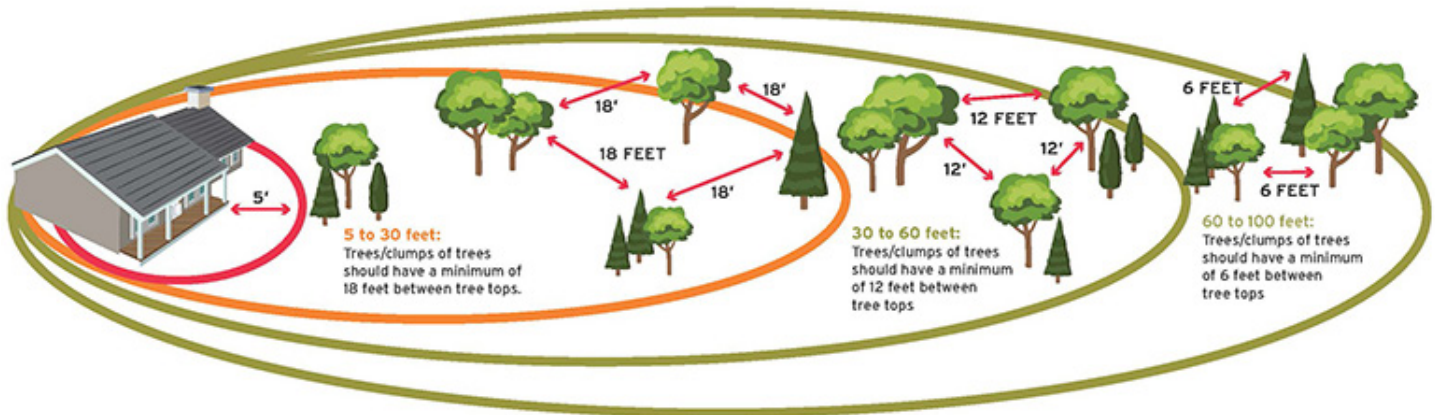
**Lincoln Electric
 Cooperative, Inc.**

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

SEND YOUR IDEAS TO:
memberservices@lincolnelectric.coop

Tree-spacing guidelines for wildfire

BY HOME IGNITION ZONE (DISTANCE FROM HOME)



WILDFIRE

Continued from page 5

actions:

- Clean roofs and gutters of dead leaves, debris and pine needles that could catch embers.
- Replace or repair any loose or missing shingles or roof tiles to prevent ember penetration.
- Install 1/8-inch metal mesh screening over vents in eaves to reduce ember intrusion.
- Clean debris from exterior attic vents and install 1/8-inch metal mesh screening.
- Repair or replace damaged or loose window screens and any broken windows.
- Screen or enclose areas below patios and decks with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating.
- Move flammable materials away from exterior walls, including mulch, flammable plants, leaves, needles and firewood piles. Remove anything stored beneath decks or porches.

Intermediate Zone (5-30 feet from the home)

This zone focuses on creating landscaping breaks to help deter flames

and reduce fire risk. Consider the following actions:

- Clear vegetation from beneath large stationary propane tanks.
- Create fuel breaks using driveways, walkways, patios and decks.
- Keep lawns and native grasses mowed to a height of four inches.
- Remove ladder fuels (vegetation that allows fire to climb from the ground to tree canopies). Prune trees up to 6-10 feet from the ground; for shorter trees, do not remove more than one-third of the total height.
- Space trees at least 18 feet apart from crown to crown, increasing spacing based on slope.
- Ensure mature tree canopies are no closer than 10 feet from any structure.
- Limit trees and shrubs to small clusters to break up continuous vegetation.

Extended Zone (30-100+ feet from the home)

This zone extends from 30 feet to as far as 200 feet from the home. The goal is not to eliminate fire but to alter its path and reduce its intensity. Recommended actions include:

- Dispose of heavy accumulations of ground litter and debris.
- Remove dead plants and tree material.

- Remove small conifers growing between mature trees.
- Clear vegetation near storage sheds or outbuildings.
- Maintain tree spacing:

*Trees 30-60 feet from the home should have at least 12 feet between canopy tops.**

*Trees 60-100 feet from the home should have at least 6 feet between canopy tops.**

**Crown spacing recommendations are based on NFPA 1144. However, optimal spacing may vary due to slope, tree species and site-specific conditions. Consult your local forestry professional for guidance tailored to your property.*

LEC's Commitment to fire prevention

At Lincoln Electric Cooperative, we strive to protect our forests and members from wildfire risks. We collaborate with the U.S. Forest Service, local agencies, and community members to promote right-of-way clearance and fire mitigation efforts.

If you'd like to learn more about line right-of-way clearance and wildfire mitigation, please contact us at our main office and ask to speak with the Operations Department. RM

Sources: [NFPA.org](https://www.nfpa.org), [DNRC.MT.gov](https://www.dnrc.mt.gov), [KTTV.com/news/fire-watch](https://www.kttv.com/news/fire-watch)

Right-of-way easement Q&A

WHAT is an electrical right-of-way?

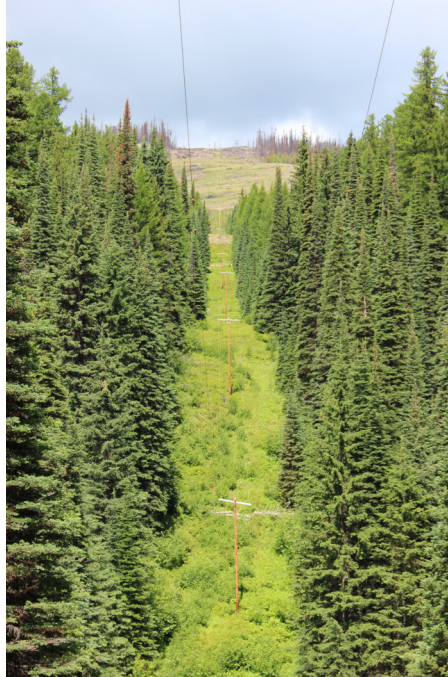
A right-of-way is an agreement between the co-op and a landowner that allows the co-op to access the property to perform maintenance on a powerline. This right-of-way may also be called an easement.

HOW big is the LEC right-of-way or easement?

For single-phase overhead lines, the right-of-way is 30 feet in total – 15 feet on each side of the centerline. For three-phase lines, the right-of-way is 40 feet. Also note that the right-of-way distances to the furthest point goes to the sky. So, if there is a tree leaning into the right-of-way, but its source is outside the specified distance, it will be removed.

CAN I put my overhead powerlines underground?

Yes, you have the option to convert your overhead electrical lines to underground. However, you are responsible



for the cost of the conversion. If your line is due for regular maintenance and you choose to convert to underground at the same time, you may qualify to have a portion of the cost covered by

Lincoln Electric Cooperative (LEC).

WHAT if I have a hazard tree leaning toward my line?

If you have a hazard tree that could damage the electrical line, contact LEC. They may opt to remove it at no cost to you.

DO I have to provide access to the right-of-way through my land?

Yes, access through fences, gates and open property is necessary for LEC crews to reach the lines for repairs and maintenance. It is recommended that locked gates have an optional LEC lock or a shared combination lock to ensure crews can easily access the right-of-way.

WHAT if my contact number, address or email changes?

It is very important to keep your contact information up to date with LEC. This is how we will notify you about scheduled maintenance and right-of-way clearance. RM

Meet Josie Roose BILLING AND COLLECTIONS SPECIALIST

JOSIE is originally from Wisconsin, where she earned her associate degree in Sociology from the University of Sheboygan. While there, she met her husband, and in 2018, they moved back to his hometown of Eureka.

When the billing position at Lincoln Electric Cooperative (LEC) opened in 2022, Josie saw a great career opportunity with a strong and successful cooperative. Before joining LEC, she worked as a medical billing professional in Eureka. With more than 15 years of customer service experience, Josie enjoys interacting with members and appreciates LEC's operations, adaptability and commitment to fairness.

She also has a passion for giving back to her community and previously volunteered



The faces of LEC

Introducing our Lincoln Electric family of employees to all our members

as a middle school soccer coach in Eureka, leading her team to a winning season. Outside of work, Josie loves spending time with her family and two dogs. She enjoys golfing at Indian Springs, and is always up for an adventure – whether it's exploring a new city or venturing into the backwoods of Montana.

Thank you, Josie, for all you do for our LEC members!