

Electric Line Newsletter

PRIORITIZE SAFETY YEAR-ROUND

At Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC), we recognize Electrical Safety Month every May, but we also know the importance of practicing safety year-round. From our co-op crews to you, the consumer-members we serve, we recognize that everyone has a part to play in prioritizing safety.

According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, thousands of people in the U.S. are critically injured or electrocuted as a result of electrical fires and accidents in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable. Electricity is a necessity, and it powers our daily lives. But we know first-hand how dangerous electricity can be because we work with it 365 days a year.

To us, safety is more than a catchphrase. It's our responsibility to keep co-op employees safe. Additionally, we want to help keep you and all members of our community safe. That's why you'll see CWEC hosting safety demonstrations at community events and in schools throughout the year, to demonstrate the dangers of electricity. We discuss emergency scenarios, such as what to do in a car accident involving a utility pole and downed power lines. We caution students on the dangers of pad-mounted transformers and overloading circuits with too many electronic devices.

Electricity is an integral part of modern life. Given the prevalence of electrical devices, tools and appliances, we'd like to pass along a few practical electrical safety tips.

Frayed wires pose a serious safety hazard. Power cords can become damaged or frayed from age, heavy

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**PLUG
INTO
SAFETY**



ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH

Make electrical safety a priority
this month, and every month.

Contact Us:

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800-377-2932

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Office Hours: Monday thru



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use or excessive current flow through the wiring. If cords become frayed or cut, replace them, as they could cause a shock when handled.

Avoid overloading circuits. Circuits can only cope with a limited amount of electricity. Overload happens when you draw more electricity than a circuit can safely handle—by having too many devices running on one circuit.

Label circuit breakers to understand the circuits in your home. Contact a qualified electrician if your home is more than 40 years old and you need to install multiple large appliances that consume large amounts of electricity.

Use extension cords properly. Never plug an extension cord into another extension cord. If you “daisy chain” them together, it could lead to overheating, creating a potential fire hazard. Don’t exceed the wattage of the cord. Doing so also creates a risk of overloading the cord and creating a fire hazard. Extension cords should not be used as permanent solutions. If you need additional outlets, contact a licensed electrician to help.

RESTORING POWER SAFELY AND EFFICIENTLY

We do our best to avoid them, but there’s no way around it: power outages occasionally happen.

For most Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) members, outages are rare and only last a few hours. But when major storms, like the storm in late July and the windstorm in December impact our area, extended outages are unavoidable.

So, when the power goes out, how do CWEC crews know where to start working? How do you know if your outage has been reported? We’ve got answers to these questions and more, and it all starts with a safe, efficient plan for power restoration.

When the lights go out and it’s safe for our crews to begin the restoration process, they start by repairing power lines and equipment that will restore power to the greatest number of people in the shortest time possible.

This process typically begins with repairs to the larger main distribution lines that service a great number of homes and businesses. After those repairs are made, crews work on tap lines, which deliver power to trans-



We can’t control the weather, but as a member of CWEC, you can feel confident knowing we’re standing by, ready to restore power as quickly and safely as possible. *(Photo by Terry McGraw, Pixabay user)*

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formers, either mounted on utility poles (for above-ground service) or placed on pads (for underground service). Finally, individual service lines that run between the transformer and the home are repaired.

We can't control the weather, but we can prepare for it. CWEC keeps a supply of extra utility poles, transformers and other equipment on hand so we can quickly get to work in the event of an outage. When widespread outages occur, multiple crews will be out in the field simultaneously working to repair damage at multiple locations. We also coordinate with nearby co-ops to bring in additional crews when necessary.

A proactive approach to maintenance helps minimize the chance of prolonged outages; this is why you see CWEC crews periodically trimming trees and clearing vegetation near rights-of-way. We love trees too, but it only takes one overgrown limb to knock out power for an entire neighborhood. Trimming improves power reliability for our entire community. In addition to managing vegetation, we regularly inspect utility poles, power lines and other critical equipment to maintain a more reliable system.

If you experience a power outage, don't assume a neighbor reported it. It's best to report the outage yourself, and we make it easy to do. The quickest way to report an outage is by calling 1-800-377-2932 or 715-677-2211. Of note, the CWEC website and Facebook page are not monitored while the CWEC office is closed.

If you have a medical condition that requires electrical equipment, please let us know, and always have a backup plan in place. This plan could include a portable generator, extra medical supplies or moving to an alternate location until power is restored. If you plan to use a generator for backup power, read all safety information and instructions before use.

Mother Nature can be unpredictable, but as a member of CWEC, you can feel confident knowing we're standing by, ready to restore power as quickly and safely as possible.

The Steps to Restoring Power

When a major outage occurs, our crews restore service to the greatest number of people in the shortest time possible - until everyone has power.



1. High-Voltage Transmission Lines
These lines carry large amounts of electricity. They rarely fail but must be repaired first.



2. Distribution Substations
Crews inspect substations, which can serve hundreds or thousands of people.



3. Main Distribution Lines
Main lines serve essential facilities like hospitals and larger communities.



4. Individual Homes and Businesses
After main line repairs are complete, we repair lines that serve individual homes and businesses.