

Look Sharp for Safety



A NOTE FROM CEO/GENERAL MANAGER DEBBIE ROBINSON

WE ALL WANT THE BEST FOR the people in our lives—our family, friends, community and others. At Wood County Electric Cooperative, that includes you, our members.

It's why we make safety a top priority, and why we devote time and energy to making our staff and community residents aware of how to stay safe around electricity. Our modern way of life depends on this resource, but electricity can be dangerous or even deadly, so we encourage everyone to know how to use electricity safely.

For instance, if you're working with tall ladders—cleaning gutters, trimming trees or undertaking other projects outside—we remind you to look up and stay a safe distance away from overhead power lines, especially those connected to your home.

If a project involves digging, be sure to call 811 a few working days in advance to have your underground utility lines marked before you put shovel to the ground.

This will keep you from damaging any electric, gas, water, cable, sewer or other lines that are buried on your property. One phone call could prevent inconvenient outages and possible injury.

Help children understand the importance of staying away from electric utility equipment. Teach them never to climb trees or fly kites near power lines.

Know how to prepare for and stay safe during and after storms and natural disasters that could leave behind electrical hazards, such as downed power lines and submerged electrical devices.

We don't want anyone to take a chance that could end in tragedy. We encourage you to visit SafeElectricity.org, where you'll find lifesaving information presented in videos, interactive games for children, online teaching resources and much more. At WCEC, we've

also purchased SafeElectricity's comprehensive first responder training CD, which we are making available to first responders within our service territory.

Cooperatives value our members' safety and well-being, and WCEC will continue working to educate everyone on important safety considerations.



Children should never be left unsupervised when stovetop burners are on.

You Can Prevent Burns

THERE'S NO REASON for anyone in your family to suffer from an electrical burn or any other kind of burn.

The first week of February is Burn Awareness Week, and that's a good time to take an inventory of your home's burn hazards. Spend some time this week to:

- ▶ Replace smoke detector batteries, which need changing at least once a year.
- ▶ Put away any extension cords left over from Christmas. They're not made for permanent use and can burn you or your children if they overheat because of overuse.
- ▶ If any electrical wires are hiding under rugs, move them. Stepping on them can cause damage and turn them into a burn hazard or fire risk.
- ▶ Teach your children to stay a safe distance away from the stove.
- ▶ Turn pot handles inward when you cook, and place them on rear burners if you have children.
- ▶ Lower your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees, a comfortable temperature that won't scald.
- ▶ Replace traditional candles with realistic-looking, battery-operated ones.
- ▶ Forbid your children from lighting matches and playing with lighters.



Climbing trees can be irresistible to children, so be sure they know to check for power lines before climbing.

Safety Essentials for Your Home

MAKE SURE YOUR FAMILY IS SAFE FROM ELECTRICAL DANGERS. Safe Electricity provides a checklist of basic electric safety essentials to help you keep your home safe from electrical fire and shock hazards:

Check outlets for loose-fitting plugs. Replace missing or broken wall plates so wiring and components are not exposed. If you have young children at home, install tamper-resistant outlets or cover unused outlets with plastic safety caps.

Never force plugs into outlets. Do not remove the grounding pin to make a three-prong plug fit a two-prong outlet. Avoid overloading outlets with adapters and too many appliance plugs.

Make sure cords are not frayed or cracked, placed under carpets or rugs, or located in high-traffic areas. Do not nail or staple them to walls, floors or other objects.

Use extension cords only on a temporary basis—not as permanent household wiring. Make sure they have safety closures to protect children from shock and mouth burns.

Check wattage to make sure that lightbulbs match the fixture requirements. Replace bulbs that have higher wattage ratings than recommended. Screw bulbs in securely so they do not overheat.

Make sure outlets near water are equipped with ground-fault circuit interrupters. Critical areas include the kitchen, bathrooms, laundry, basement, garage and outdoors. Test these outlets monthly to ensure that they are working properly.

Make sure fuses are properly sized for the circuit they are protecting. If you do not know the correct rating, have an electrician identify and label the correct size to be used. Always replace a fuse with the same size you are removing.

If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker or gives you an electrical shock, immediately unplug it and have it repaired or replaced. Look for cracks or damage in wiring and connectors. Use surge protectors to protect electronics.

Check periodically for loose wall receptacles, wires or loose lighting fixtures. Listen for popping or sizzling sounds behind walls. Immediately shut off then professionally replace light switches that are hot to the touch and lights that spark or flicker.

As you continue to upgrade your home with more lighting, appliances and electronics, your home's service capacity may become overburdened. If fuses blow or trip frequently, have a professional determine the appropriate service requirements for your home.



Just because there are enough outlets doesn't mean there's enough amperage to safely power everything. Be careful not to overload circuits.



Wood County Electric Cooperative

501 S. Main St. • P.O. Box 1827
Quitman, TX 75783

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Debbie Robinson

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Contact Us

CALL US
(903) 763-2203

EMAIL
info@wcec.org

OUTAGE HOTLINE
1-866-415-2951

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wcec.org

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MOBILE CONVENIENCE CENTER

Monday, First Methodist Church, *Van*
Tuesday, Family Dollar, *Mount Vernon*
Wednesday, City National Bank, *Hawkins*
Thursday, Brookshire's, *Winnboro*
Friday, Economy Drug, *Grand Saline*

Students: Apply Now To Win Trip to DC

YOU'RE A TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT. You're smart; you have big dreams. Maybe you've never been out of the state, and maybe you've never flown on a plane, but you want to travel—experience a big city, visit historic landmarks and meet people, and not just fellow high schoolers but influential public figures, like U.S. representatives.

If that describes you, then you're a candidate to apply for a slot on the Government-in-Action Youth Tour, an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., June 8–17, sponsored by Wood County Electric Cooperative and organized by Texas Electric Cooperatives.

Youth Tour is an action-packed trip to the U.S. capital with about 125 of your peers and chaperones from across Texas.

You'll start your trip by touring the Texas Capitol in Austin, as well as the Bullock Texas State History Museum. Then you'll

travel to Washington, D.C., to visit the Washington National Cathedral, Arlington National Cemetery, Mount Vernon, Smithsonian Institution, many of the memorials and more.

Activities include learning about rural electrification, seeing a performance at the Kennedy Center, going on a riverboat cruise with dinner and dancing, and meeting elected officials.

You could be part of this legacy shared by the more than 3,800 past Texas Youth Tour students who have participated since 1965.

To apply, candidates should submit a 450- to 500-word essay (about one typed page), which will be judged by an independent panel. This year's topic is, "My co-op, my local human connection." Essayists should write on this topic: "My co-op, my local human connection: The value that WCEC brings to the region, and the importance of the local connection." The essays will be judged on composition, neatness, originality and knowledge of the subject.

2016 Eligibility and Rules

Submit an essay of 450–500 typed words on this topic: "My co-op, my local human connection: The value that WCEC brings to the region and the importance of the local connection."

Essay entries should be dropped off at the cooperative or mailed to:

Wood County Electric Cooperative
Attention: Youth Tour 2016
P.O. Box 1827
Quitman, TX 75783

Eligibility

- ▶ Each applicant must be a high school student enrolled as a junior or senior.
- ▶ Each applicant must be a dependent of a WCEC member with permanent resident status in WCEC service area.

Rules

- ▶ Entries must arrive at WCEC by noon, February 12. Entries received after that date will be disqualified.
- ▶ No name should appear on the essay. Students must attach an official cover sheet, available online at wcec.org under the Community Programs tab.
- ▶ Reference materials from various sources including libraries and the Internet may be used, but the essay must be in the student's own words.





If you come across an accident involving a power pole or downed lines, call 911 immediately and do not touch the vehicle, lines or pole—or anything in contact with them.

SAFELECTRICITY.ORG

Helping Others Means Safety First

GOOD SAMARITANS ARE CHARACTERIZED AS PEOPLE who have the desire to help those in need. Knowing how best to help in an emergency situation can make the difference between life and death—for the victim and the Good Samaritan.

Electricity can be an unforeseen hazard, particularly when overhead power lines have fallen and made contact with vehicles, the ground or anything else that conducts electricity. The wire does not have to be sparking or arcing to be live. Always assume a power line is energized, and never touch or approach it.

If you come upon an accident scene involving a vehicle and downed lines, stay back and warn others to stay away. Make sure the occupants of the car stay inside the vehicle until the utility has de-energized the lines.

In a rare circumstance, the vehicle may catch fire. The only way the occupants can safely exit is to jump free and clear without touching the vehicle and ground at the same time. Advise them to jump and land with feet together, then hop away to safety. Looking silly may save their lives.

If you encounter any other accident situation in which you believe someone is in contact with electricity or has just suffered an electrical shock, here are some additional tips:

- ▶ Look first. Do NOT touch. The person may still be in contact with the electrical source and be energized. If there are others nearby, make sure they do not touch the person, either.
- ▶ Call or have someone nearby call 911 and the electric utility.
- ▶ Turn off the source of electricity (i.e., circuit breaker or box)—if known and if safely possible. If you are not sure, wait for help from the emergency responders.
- ▶ Only once the source of electricity is off, check for signs of circulation (breathing, coughing or movement). Provide any necessary first aid.
- ▶ Prevent shock. Lay the person down and, if possible, position the head slightly lower than the trunk of the body, with the legs elevated.
- ▶ Do not move a person with an electrical injury unless the person is in immediate danger.

Anyone who has come into contact with electricity should see a doctor to check for internal injuries, even if he or she has no obvious signs or symptoms.

Did You Know

Google operations account for roughly 0.013 percent of the world's electricity use. The company uses enough energy to continuously power 200,000 homes.

—PC Magazine, September 2011



ALEXEY STIOP | DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB

Power Tip

Save energy and money by lowering your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees. This will also slow mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes.