

USA F. YOUNG | ISTOCK.COM

Generator Safety

Know the rules

AS WE HEAD INTO SPRING STORM

season, your electric cooperative encourages you to review these safety rules for portable generator use.

Never connect a standby generator to your home's electrical system. Following are the only two safe ways to connect a standby generator to your equipment.

Stationary generator: An approved generator transfer switch, which keeps your home's circuits separate from the co-op's, should be installed by a professional.

Portable generator: Plug appliances directly into the outlet provided on the generator.

Set up and run your generator in a well-ventilated area outside the home. Make sure it's away from your garage, doors, windows and vents. The carbon monoxide generated is deadly.

Use a heavy-duty extension cord to connect electric appliances to the outlet on the generator.

Start the generator before connecting appliances.

When the weather creates wet or damp conditions, use a generator only when necessary. Protect the generator by operating it under an open, canopylike structure on a dry surface where water cannot pool or drain under it.

Be sure the generator is turned off and cool before fueling it.

Keep children and pets away from portable generators. Many generator components are hot enough to cause burns during operation.

Avoid the Big Green Box

WHILE TRANSFORMERS FOR OVERHEAD POWER LINES ARE MOUNTED ATOP TALL UTILITY poles, padmount transformers, aka big green boxes, are at ground level.

Whether high or low, transformers change voltage from higher levels to lower levels that people can safely use in their homes for their electronics, appliances and lighting. And while ground-level transformers are safe, you should always steer clear of them.

To stay safe around those big green boxes, observe these tips:

Keep areas surrounding padmount transformers clear so that workers can safely access them when needed. Co-op technicians need at least 10 feet of clearance on the opening side of a padmount transformer and approximately 4 feet of open space at the rear and on the sides of the metal housing. These distances allow for tool use, including hot sticks, which are typically 8 feet long and used to work with energized equipment. It also ensures that technicians working on a transformer have space to maneuver if problems occur.

Respect these distances when planting shrubs or building structures. Restricting access not only can prolong outages but also creates a significant safety risk for our employees.

Never dig near padmount transformers. They are surrounded by underground cables. Hitting a cable could result in electrical shock or disruption of service. Always call 811 before you dig.

Make sure children know to never touch, climb or play on padmount transformers. Never put fingers, sticks or other objects through openings in the transformer box.

Report problems. If you notice anything amiss, like an unlocked transformer or one that has been damaged, please contact Wood County Electric Cooperative immediately.

Legal Notice

THE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE OF WOOD COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE WILL MEET AT the cooperative office at 501 S. Main St. in Quitman at least 40 days prior to the annual meeting. The committee is composed of the following members:

Carolyn Bryant
201 East Oak
Yantis 75497

Glenn E. Morris
268 FM 900 E.
Mount Vernon 75457

Clarence Meiske
1547 FM 2659
Hawkins 75765

Dr. Beverly Waddleton
P.O. Box 996
Quitman 75783

Judy Peoples
1646 VZ CR 1222
Grand Saline 75140

Bobby Rhea
3777 CR 2403
Winnsboro 75494

Willie Cicero
1010 State Highway 64
Ben Wheeler 75754

Nomination and election of directors is defined in Article V, Section 3 of the bylaws. Copies of the bylaws are available upon request by calling the cooperative at (903) 763-2203 and at wcec.org. The Elections Committee shall make nominations for directors for districts 5 and 6. Directors whose terms are expiring are Cathy Roberts, District 5 representative and vice president of the board, and Jane Roberson, District 6 representative and secretary-treasurer. The annual meeting of Wood County Electric Cooperative will be held October 11 at 2 p.m. at Gov. Jim Hogg Park, 101 Governor Hogg Parkway in Quitman.



DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

begins at 2 a.m., Sunday, March 10. Remember to set your clocks ahead one hour when you go to bed Saturday.



Wood County Electric Cooperative

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

CEO/GENERAL MANAGER

Debbie Robinson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Pat B. Lindley, President, *District 1*
Cathy S. Roberts, Vice President, *District 5*
Jane Roberson, Secretary-Treasurer, *District 6*
Burke Bullock, *District 2*
Kenneth Langley, *District 3*
Brent Glenn, *District 4*
Lewis D. Young, *District 7*

Contact Us

CALL US
(903) 763-2203

EMAIL
info@wcec.org

OUTAGE HOTLINE
1-866-415-2951

FIND US ON THE WEB
wcec.org

MEMBER BENEFITS AND SERVICES

- Online account access and bill payment
- Paperless E-Bill services
- Free bill-paying app
- Visa, Mastercard and Discover accepted
- SmartPower prepay electric system
- Scholarships and youth programs
- Safety and energy conservation programs

MOBILE CONVENIENCE CENTER

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

TEXAS CO-OP POWER 
CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

Slow Down for Safety

YOU'RE DRIVING ALONG ON A SUNNY DAY, MINDING THE SPEED LIMIT, WHEN YOU encounter a Wood County Electric Cooperative crew working on the side of the road. Do you slow down, move over or continue driving normally? If you can safely do so, moving over to give our crew an empty lane as a buffer is ideal. If you're unable to move over before passing the crew, your next best option is to slow down significantly.

In 2015, speeding was involved in 28 percent of fatal crashes that occurred in construction or maintenance zones, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Texas' Move Over/Slow Down requirement, though it doesn't extend to Wood County EC's employees specifically, nevertheless offers excellent guidance for safely negotiating any roadside work. The law states that when drivers encounter tow trucks, police, fire, emergency medical service or Texas Department of Transportation vehicles stopped on the side of the road with emergency or alternately flashing lights activated, the motorist must:

- ▶ **Vacate the lane closest to the applicable vehicle** stopped on the side of the road (if the road has multiple lanes traveling in the same direction).
- ▶ **Or slow down to 20 mph below the speed limit.**

While this statute may not officially apply to our personnel, they face the same risks when working alongside a busy roadway as all of the workers the law includes. For their safety, we'd appreciate if you'd extend to them the same courtesy that the law requires for first responders and others. Whether they're restoring an outage, trimming trees or otherwise clearing rights-of-way, our employees perform an invaluable service, and we care about them deeply. With your help, we can make sure they go home to their families every day.



BLACKRED | ISTOCK.COM

WIN SEASON PASSES FOR A FAMILY OF 5

SCHLITTERBAHN

40th Anniversary
SCHLITTERBAHN
WATERPARKS & RESORTS

One lucky Wood County EC member will win!

Get details and enter online at
TexasCooPower.com/contests.

Find Schlitterbahn info at schlitterbahn.com.

An Outlet for Energy Savings

DOES THE EBB AND FLOW OF YOUR ELECTRIC BILL HAVE YOU SEARCHING FOR AN affordable way to better control your energy use? The latest in next-generation energy-saving devices may provide some relief.

New smart power strips and plugs feature surge protection just like their predecessors but also tie in the smart functionality of an internet-connected device. These tools enable you to fully shut off power to your devices to prevent them from consuming electricity when they're switched off—with just a few clicks and swipes on your smartphone. Several devices found inside your home are known to produce phantom loads—using power even when they're "off." In fact, most entertainment systems consist of several phantom loads that come from TVs, DVD players and gaming consoles.

There are several different kinds of energy-saving outlets available, but there are two factors you should consider. First is size; there are many sizes, ranging from a single external outlet to a power strip with multiple sockets. The second thing you'll want to consider is Wi-Fi connectivity. Internet-connected outlets, commonly known as smart plugs, enable you to remotely control an outlet through your smartphone, tablet or home assistant (such as Google Home or Amazon Echo).

Fortunately, these energy-saving outlets are affordable for most folks. The average smart outlet goes for \$10–\$20 online and has the potential to pay for itself within two years depending on how often you use it.

Smart plugs typically come with simple instructions to download an accompanying app on your smartphone and then connect the plug to your home's Wi-Fi, allowing you to turn the device on and off using your phone.

You also can have devices turn off at a set time each night and turn on every morning when you're ready to use them. If you want to use your TV, for example, at a time that's outside the preset hours, you can easily switch the device on through the smart outlet's smartphone app.

Products such as the ThinkEco smart outlet (pictured below) and the Insteon On/Off Outlet can be controlled remotely.

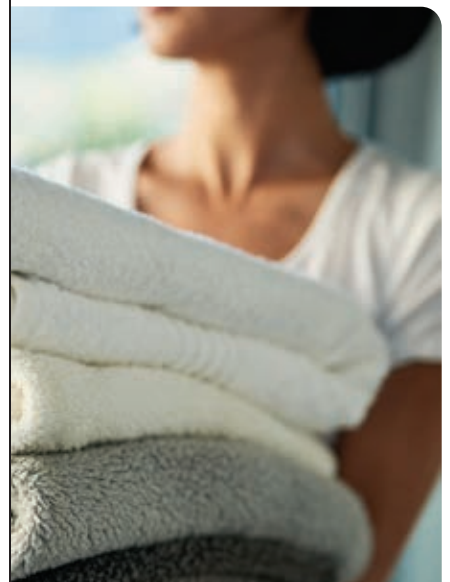


THINKECO

Did You Know?

In March 1800, scientist Alessandro Volta first outlined his invention, the electric pile. Today, we refer to electric piles as batteries.

MARIUSFM77 | ISTOCK.COM



PEOPLEIMAGES | ISTOCK.COM

Power Tip

Dry towels and heavier cottons separately from lighter-weight clothing. You'll spend less time running the dryer for lightweight items and save energy.