

Teach Your Children Electrical Safety



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER LEROY T. SKLOSS

Electricity is a dynamic power source. We live our lives surrounded by it, but sometimes we forget just how dangerous electricity can be. Many home electrical fires, injuries and electrocutions can be prevented when we understand and practice electrical safety. This is especially true for our youngest co-op members.

Throughout the year, Karnes Electric Cooperative offers many opportunities to help teach youngsters about electricity. But as your children's first and most important teacher, perhaps it's time for you to have a talk with your sons and daughters to reinforce those lessons.

Start at an early age, teaching them about the physical dangers associated with electrical components and how to handle electrical plugs, outlets, switches and other devices. Keep in mind that talking to your children about electrical safety should also include fun activities and facts about the basics—what electricity is, the need to respect its power and how to use it efficiently as they study, work and play.

As we all know, kids will be kids. Getting them to show interest in some of these lessons won't be easy. Just remember that what your children learn from you today can be a lifesaver later when they are tempted to climb up a utility pole, encounter potential hazards like downed power lines in their path, or play hide-and-seek

behind those big metal electrical boxes in the neighborhood.

Gather your youngsters around the kitchen table or on the front porch—some of the best teachable moments about electrical safety can happen in and around your home. Look around. There are plenty of opportunities to demonstrate safety that are as close as the electrical outlet on your living room wall. For example, show young children how plugs work, and let them know that even if they are curious about the slits of an electrical outlet, nothing else should be placed inside.

Each year, about 2,400 children end up in the emergency room after suffering injuries caused by inserting objects—paper clips, pens, screws, nails, forks, hairpins, coins and more—into electrical receptacles. That's about seven children a day who sustain injuries ranging from electric shock to burns.

But this isn't the only electrical mishap that affects youngsters. Our reliance on electronics and gadgets have left both youngsters and their parents at risk when they overcrowd electrical outlets, continue to use frayed wires, place devices near liquids or leave electronics on for long periods of time. Many of the same guidelines we offer to protect adults can also help protect children. We should all set good examples for our youngsters.

And as they grow older, remember to keep teaching your kids about the power of electricity and how to use it safely. Supplement your lessons at home with resources galore, including those provided on our website, karnesec.org.



A slow cooker is a great way to cook without adding excess heat to your home.

Cook Less, Cook Quicker When It's Hot

Cooking and baking during this summer can heat up your house, compete with air conditioning and make everyone uncomfortable. So cooking less can save you energy and keep you cooler.

► Prepare your main course outside on the barbecue grill. Even if it's hot outdoors, you won't add heat to the inside of your home.

► When a cooler day or evening rolls in, take the opportunity to cook. Prepare two or three meals at once and freeze them, so all you'll have to do is thaw and reheat them in the microwave the next time it's too hot to cook.

► Enjoy cold meals and snacks that don't need cooking, like vegetable salads; fruit, cheese and bread; hummus or guacamole with chips or celery; sandwiches; cold soups and smoothies.

► If you must cook, use the microwave oven or a covered pan on the stovetop. Either one pushes less heat into the kitchen than a hot oven.

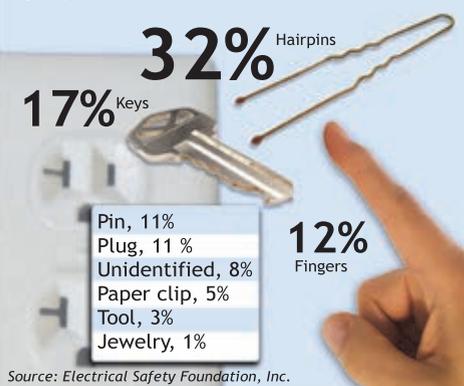
► Choose foods that cook quickly, like fish and vegetables. Chopping veggies into small, evenly sized pieces speeds cooking time.

► Don't use the microwave or oven to defrost frozen food. Instead, place the frozen item in the refrigerator and let it thaw out overnight before cooking it the next day.

► Preparing food in an electric skillet, wok or slow cooker adds less heat to the air than cooking on the stove.

Objects Commonly Placed in Electrical Outlets

Every year, 2,400 children are injured after inserting household objects into electrical outlets. These are the most common objects placed in outlets:



The Source of Our Power

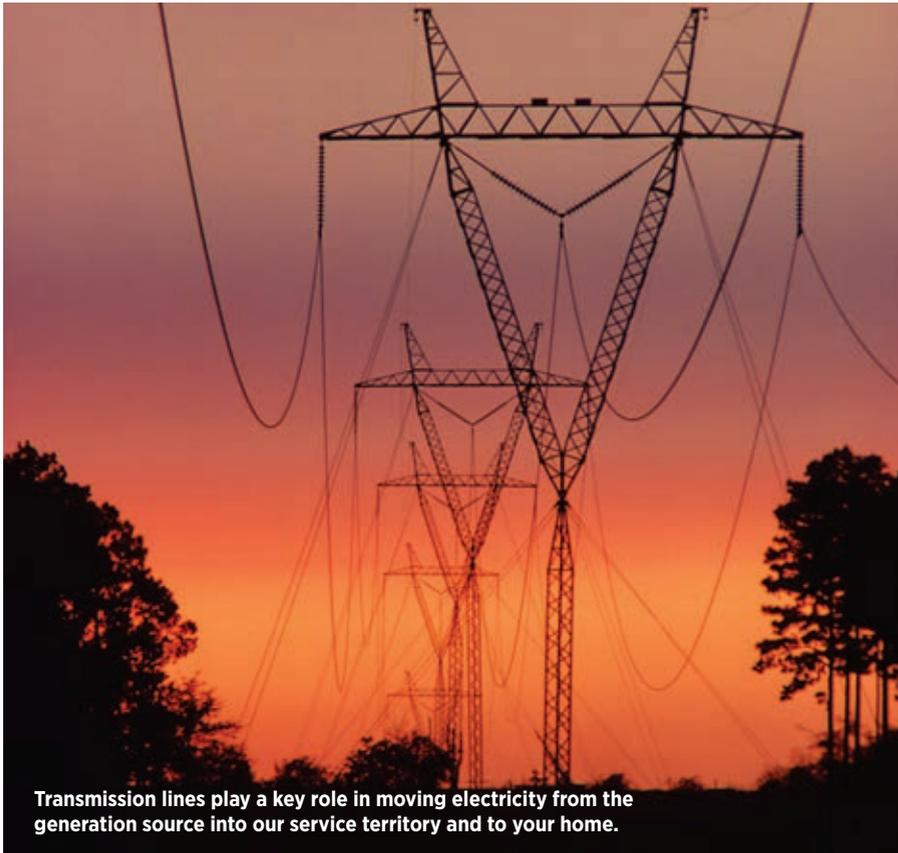
With the mere flip of a switch, electricity illuminates our lives. But have you ever thought about where your power comes from? Most of us don't give it a second thought until our service is interrupted and we're left in the dark, even if only for a short amount of time. In today's world, electricity is a necessity, and this necessity travels a great distance to reach you, our members.

Karnes EC provides electricity to 10,781 members, and it takes a network of folks to do so. We build and maintain the lines and manage the equipment needed to provide you with safe, reliable power—but did you know that we don't actually generate the power that is supplied to your home? That's where our local generation and transmission cooperative comes in.

Your local cooperative receives electricity from South Texas Electric Cooperative. G&Ts are wholesale power suppliers that are owned and governed by multiple distribution cooperatives like ours. This joint ownership splits the G&T's operating costs among all its member co-ops, allowing each to purchase power at a much lower cost than each would pay on its own.

G&T co-ops send their power to distribution co-ops via high-voltage transmission lines. From there the electricity is routed to substations, where the voltage is reduced to an appropriate and safe level for members' usage. From the substations, power is spread to many transformers—those large boxes that sit at the top of power poles—before it is finally directed to your home.

So as you can see, there's a little more to it than flipping a switch, but we've got you covered. Karnes EC has provided members with safe, reliable and affordable power for 76 years. That continues to be our No. 1 goal today so that you can enjoy the quality of life that comes with power.



Transmission lines play a key role in moving electricity from the generation source into our service territory and to your home.



Karnes Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 7, Karnes City, TX 78118

GENERAL MANAGER

Leroy T. Skloss

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Main Office

1007 N. Highway 123, Karnes City

District Office

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Pay your bill, submit meter readings and view your account summary at karnesec.org.



Contact Us

For information and outages during office hours

(830) 780-3952 Karnes City

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Watch for Signs of Heat Illnesses

Summer in Texas provides lots of opportunities for fun, whether you're lying by the pool or running on a baseball field. Texas summers also present dangers. Keep heat stress at bay—no matter your sun-soaked activity of choice—by knowing how to prevent heat-related illnesses and recognizing the symptoms in yourself and others.

Heat Stroke

The most serious of heat illnesses, heat stroke can be deadly and swift. Your body temperature could rise to 106 degrees or more in as little as 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke happens when your body temperature rises rapidly but your body cannot sweat quickly enough to cool itself. Symptoms include hot, dry skin or the opposite—profuse sweating and chills—as well as a throbbing headache, dizziness, hallucinations and slurred speech.

If you see someone with the symptoms of heat stroke, immediately call 911 and move the person to a shady area. Try misting the person with cold water, soaking his or her clothes or fanning the body.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is the result of heavy sweating—extreme loss of salt and water. People prone to heat exhaustion include the elderly, those with high blood pressure, or people who work in hot conditions. Besides excessive sweating, symptoms include extreme weakness or fatigue, dizziness and confusion, nausea, clammy skin, muscle cramps and shallow, rapid breathing.

If a person suffers from heat exhaustion, move him or her to a shaded or air-conditioned area. The victim should drink cool, nonalcoholic beverages, and take a cool shower or bath.

Heat Syncope

Sunbathers may be prone to heat syncope, which is dizziness or fainting after lying (or standing) for long periods of time.

Dehydration can contribute to an episode of heat syncope, so keep that water bottle handy when you head to the beach.

If you feel dizzy when you sit up after lying down for a long time, sit or lie back down in a cool place and sip on a cool beverage—water, sports drinks or clear juice.

Heat Cramps

Folks who work or play sports outside in the heat may suffer from heat cramps, which result from low salt levels after heavy sweating. Stay alert if you feel cramping because it could be a symptom of heat exhaustion. Heat cramps usually are felt in the arms, legs or abdomen.

If you feel them, stop what you're doing, sit in a cool place and drink clear juice or a sports beverage. Take it easy for a few hours after you no longer feel the cramps—if you return too quickly to your activity, the condition could transition into heat exhaustion or heat stroke. If you have heart problems, are on a low-sodium diet, or if the cramps do not go away in an hour, call a doctor.

Heat Rash

Heavy sweating can cause a heat rash during hot, humid weather. It looks like a red cluster of pimples or small blisters that usually pop up on the neck or chest, groin, and in the crook of your elbow.

Keep the area dry and use baby powder to alleviate discomfort.

Prevent Wildfires

Wildfires are considered to be one of the most powerful natural disasters known to humanity, and in our state's hot, dry climate, the late summer and early fall seasons are times to exercise extra caution.

Most Texans remember the severe wildfires of 2011, when more than 31,000 fires around the state destroyed 4 million acres of land and thousands of homes and businesses, according to the Texas A&M Forest Service. And more recent fires across the country serve as a deadly reminder that wildfire dangers are ever-present.

Although some fires are caused by lightning—on average, about 10,000 per year nationally—nine out of 10 are caused by humans. But there are things homeowners can do to reduce that risk. Take these measures to help prevent fires from happening near your home.

- ▶ Clear leaves and other debris from gutters, eaves, porches and decks. This prevents stray embers from igniting your home.
- ▶ Remove dead vegetation from under your deck and within 10 feet of the house.
- ▶ Remove anything stored underneath decks or porches.
- ▶ Screen or box in areas below patios and decks with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating.
- ▶ Remove flammable materials (firewood stacks, propane tanks, dry vegetation) within 30 feet of your home's foundation and outbuildings, including garages and sheds. If it can catch fire, don't let it touch your house, deck or porch.

▶ Wildfire can spread to treetops. If you have trees on your property, prune them so that the lowest branches are 6 to 10 feet from the ground.

▶ Keep your lawn hydrated and maintained. If it is brown, cut it down to reduce fire intensity. Dry grass and shrubs are a perfect fuel for wildfires.

▶ Don't let debris and lawn cuttings linger. Dispose of these items quickly to reduce fuel for fire.

▶ Inspect shingles or roof tiles. Replace or repair those that are loose or missing to prevent ember penetration.

▶ Cover exterior attic vents with metal wire mesh no larger than 1/8 inch to prevent sparks from entering the home.

▶ Enclose under-eave and soffit vents or screens with metal mesh to prevent ember entry.

Keep your home and family safe this fire season. For more tips and information, visit firewise.org.



Nine out of 10 wildfires are caused by humans. Learn what you should do to prevent fires.



Verify Before You Buy

If you're trying to do your part for the environment by choosing "green" products that use less energy and create less pollution, chances are good that you're a bit confused.

Too often, a manufacturer will claim that its appliances, systems, household remodeling materials, cleaning products or even foods are "green"—and then a report comes out to dispute the claim.

It helps to check with a third-party certifying agency for proof that the "green" claims are true. Some good examples: UL—the same agency that tests electrical devices for safety—also validates environmental claims. The federal Energy Star label on an appliance means it meets high standards for energy efficiency. On food labeling, look for the USDA Organic label for verification that food is grown or raised organically.

Typically, a "green" product has some of these attributes: It contains recycled material or is recyclable itself; is made with local materials; is grown without hormones or antibiotics; is not an endangered species; saves energy; or is free of toxins that can waft into your indoor air.

Beware of words like "natural," "biodegradable," "organic" or "green" if you don't see a symbol on the package from a third-party verification agency.

Likewise, don't believe grandiose claims that seem too good to be true; they usually are. If the product label doesn't explain and prove the claims, don't buy it.

Don't be fooled by colorful, bright green or flowered packaging that implies the product is made with natural products. Read about the contents to learn what's in it.



Use the right tool for the job and be sure to wear proper safety equipment.

Use Power Tools Safely

It's often the most experienced do-it-yourselfers who injure themselves as they repair and improve their homes during the summer.

The more confident we are in our skills, after all, the less likely we are to read instructions or spend our time taking routine safety precautions.

Here are a few of the most common errors DIY-ers make that can land them in the hospital:

- ▶ Substituting the proper tool for a job with a second choice. Maybe you need a circular saw to make a proper cut, but you don't have one, so you use a jigsaw instead. The two are designed for different kinds of cutting, so using one as if it's interchangeable with the other is risky.
- ▶ Altering a tool or appliance so it's easier or more convenient to use. Don't remove safety features, like blade guards, from a tool. And never saw the grounding pin off of a three-prong plug so you can force it into a two-prong outlet.
- ▶ Using a tool that's clearly damaged or too hot. This can burn you or surprise you with unexpected motion.

Some common-sense safety tips:

- ▶ If you don't have the right tool for a job and don't want to buy it, rent it. Most home improvement stores have a good selection of tools for lease.
- ▶ Buy a tool only after you find its UL mark. This tells you that the tool meets high safety standards for fire and electric shock.
- ▶ Inspect your corded tools annually for frayed power cords and damaged parts and plugs. Don't try to repair a broken tool yourself; take it to a qualified technician or replace it.
- ▶ Maintain your tools. Tools need cleaning, and some need lubrication. The manufacturer's instructions that came with the tool will tell you what to do and how often.



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Keep Cool While Power's Out

Severe summer storms or extreme heat can cause outages that last for days. When a power outage occurs during hot weather, take steps to maintain safety and comfort until power is restored.

High winds that topple utility poles and power lines cause many summer outages. It's important to stay clear of downed power lines at all times, even during cleanup efforts. Be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard.

Assume that any dangling wires you encounter are electrical, and treat all downed or hanging lines as if they are energized and dangerous. If you are driving and come upon a downed power line, stay in your vehicle, warn others to stay away and contact emergency personnel or your electric utility. Also when driving, be careful at intersections where traffic lights may be out.

If power to your home is out for a prolonged period, know and understand important safety precautions and steps to cope with heat until power is restored:

- ▶ Remember to call your electric utility immediately to report the outage.

- ▶ Dress in loose, lightweight clothing and stay on the coolest, lowest level of your home.

- ▶ Use natural ventilation to cool homes, and consider purchasing battery-powered fans.

- ▶ Drink plenty of water and avoid heavy meals and caffeinated and alcoholic drinks.

- ▶ Keep refrigerator or freezer doors closed. A freezer that is half-full or full can keep foods frozen 24 to 48 hours. Foods can stay safe in an unopened refrigerator up to four hours. If an outage lasts longer than four hours, remove and pack meat, milk and other dairy products in a cooler with ice.

- ▶ Use safe alternative food preparations. A barbecue grill is an excellent way to prepare food. Always grill outside.

- ▶ Check on friends and relatives—especially children, seniors and those with medical conditions or disabilities. These people may need to seek emergency cooling shelters.

- ▶ Keep a first-aid kit in your home and one in your car. Make sure that it includes scissors, tweezers, safety pins, aspirin, eyewash and rubbing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide.

- ▶ Close all drapes and blinds on the sunny side of your residence.

- ▶ Take your family and pets to a basement or other cool location if you have one. Also consider going to an air-conditioned public place during warmer daytime hours.

During an outage, turn off electrical appliances and unplug



Although Karnes Electric Cooperative works diligently to keep the power on 24/7, outages can occur due to storms, accidents and other causes. If an outage does happen, let us know and rest assured, we'll get the power back on as quickly as possible.

major equipment, including air-conditioning units, computers and televisions. Power sometimes comes back in surges, which can damage electronics. Your circuits could overload when power returns if all your electronics are still on and plugged in. Leave one light on to indicate that power has been restored. Wait a few minutes, then turn on other appliances and equipment one piece at a time.

If you use a standby generator, make sure a transfer safety switch is used, or connect the appliance(s) directly to the generator output through an isolated circuit before you operate it. This prevents electricity from traveling back through the power lines, a condition known as "backfeed." Backfeed creates danger for anyone near lines, particularly crews working to restore power.