

Co-ops Stick to Service



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER BRAD BIERSTEDT

ONE MORNING, a co-op manager came to work to find a slightly burnt stick on her desk. She knew there had to be a story that went along with the stick, and she waited for the giver of the gift to come share the tale behind it.

This stick was about 18 inches long and no bigger than the diameter of your little finger. It wasn't big enough to be dangerous if it fell on you—it was barely big enough for a dog to chew on. Yet, as she found out from the lineman who eventually showed up to tell its story, this little stick managed to knock out power to more than 100 electric cooperative meters.

The co-op manager heard the frustration in the lineman's voice as he described how thoroughly he patrolled up and down 8 miles of line, trying to locate the source of the problem. He could not find it, but he would not give up until he did. He knew that lights were out and members needed electricity. Nobody, co-op employees included, enjoys being without power.

The lineman was turning around to patrol the line yet another time when his eye caught something. It was this stick—this tiny stick wedged in equipment atop a pole that knocked out service to so many. Once he'd found it, things moved fast. Repairs were made, and power was restored.

Normally, that would be the end of the story ... but that little stick made me start thinking about all we do to serve the members of Karnes Electric Cooperative. As I learned about this outage, I was thinking about the dedication of our own linemen, who work with the same degree of diligence to restore electricity in their commitment to serving you, our members.

The story also made me want to share with our members the challenges of power restoration. The difficulty in finding this stick is an example of why, when you call our office, we do not always know how long restoration will take or what is causing an outage.

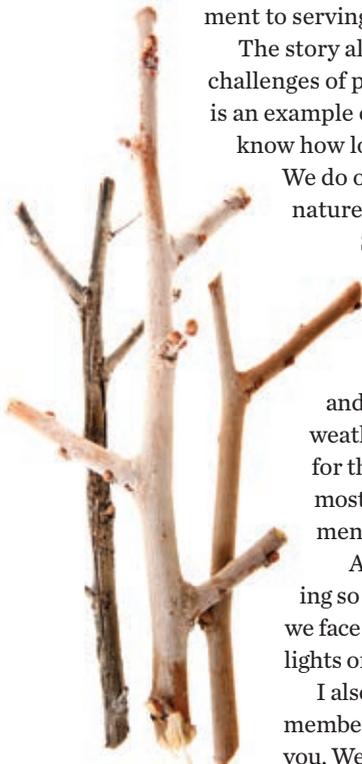
We do our absolute best, but there are many variables in nature that we cannot control.

Some would say I shouldn't share this anecdote because if members knew that just a little stick could knock out power, they would be concerned about reliability.

I see the point: When you look at all the trees, birds and animals in our service area and consider all the various weather conditions we endure, it is clearly a daunting task for the co-op to keep the lights on. Yet we do keep them on, most of the time. Day after day, week after week, our linemen and other staff ensure that our members have power.

Although some might worry about one small stick causing so many to lose electricity, I look at the millions of sticks we face daily and think: "Isn't it great that we do keep the lights on so consistently?"

I also think about what an amazing group of people our members have serving them. Thank you for letting us serve you. We promise to keep picking up the sticks every day.



Keep your kids safe as they return to school.

Back-to-School Safety Checklist

AS CHILDREN HEAD BACK to school, here are some tips to make sure your child safely travels to and from school.

Walking to School

- ▶ Walk on the sidewalk. When there is no sidewalk, walk facing the traffic.
- ▶ Avoid electrical equipment, including underground transformers, guy wires stabilizing power poles and any downed power lines.
- ▶ Before crossing the street—at crosswalks whenever available—stop and look left, right and left again for oncoming cars.

Riding a Bicycle to School

- ▶ Wear a properly fitted and secure helmet whenever riding a bike.
- ▶ Ride on the right side, in the direction of traffic.

Riding the Bus to School

- ▶ Stand 6 feet away (three giant steps) from the curb while waiting for the bus.
- ▶ Wait until the bus has stopped and the door opens before getting on or off the bus.
- ▶ When crossing the street in front of the bus, always make sure you can see the bus driver and the bus driver can see you.

—National Safety Council



Note the location of power lines and keep farm equipment a safe distance from them.

ASTRID GAST | ISTOCK.COM

Avoid Electrical Dangers During Harvest Season

FOR NATIONAL FARM SAFETY and Health Week, September 20–26 this year, Karnes Electric Cooperative reminds readers of a tragic story and offers information on how to stay safe.

After working in a field on a neighbor’s farm, a farmer parked his equipment, stepped out of the vehicle as usual—and received a severe electric shock that resulted in his death a few months later. The farmer did not know that his equipment was touching an overhead power line, and he became a path to ground for an electrical current as he set his foot on the ground.

The rush to harvest can result in agricultural workers and farmers working extra-long days with little sleep, which can impair judgment and allow them to forget necessary precautions. Power lines can pose a major hazard for farmers. Typically, power lines over roads and rural areas have a minimum clearance of 18 feet, and 12.5 feet over residential private property.

Before working in a field or around shops or grain bins, always take the time to note the location of power lines so that you can make sure to remain a safe distance from them.

To stay safe around overhead power lines, we urge farm operators and workers to:

- ▶ Always use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines.
- ▶ Use care when raising augers or the beds of grain trucks around power lines.
- ▶ Keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines—at all times, in all directions.
- ▶ Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance.
- ▶ Always remember to lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.
- ▶ Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- ▶ If a power line is sagging or low, call the electric cooperative immediately.

If contact is made with a power line, remember that it is almost always safest to stay on the equipment. Make sure to warn others to stay away and call the electric co-op immediately.

The only reason to exit is if the equipment is on fire. If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together, avoiding touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, “bunny hop” away.

If you see someone’s equipment in contact with a power line, the best help you can give is from a safe distance. Make sure to yell out to, signal or call the equipment operator to make sure he remains in the vehicle. Notify the cooperative immediately.

Karnes Electric Cooperative

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

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Brad Bierstedt

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COOPERATIVE OFFICES

Main Office

1007 N. Highway 123, Karnes City

District Office

1824 W. Goodwin, Pleasanton

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
(830) 569-5538 Pleasanton
1-888-807-3952 Toll-free

To report a power outage after 5 p.m. and on weekends and holidays

(830) 780-3952

Coy City, Ecleto, Floresville, Gillette, Goliad, Karnes City, Kenedy, Runge, Three Rivers, Tilden and surrounding areas

(830) 569-5538

Charlotte, Christine, Pleasanton, Poteet, Verdi and surrounding areas

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karnesec.org

Caulk This Way

Simple tricks for sealing cracks

LIKE A COAT WITH A BROKEN ZIPPER, a home with air leaks doesn't do a good job of resisting the elements. Even small gaps and cracks can keep the building from operating at its maximum level of energy efficiency. Fortunately, you can seal gaps and cracks inexpensively by using caulk. Here are some tips to help you get the best possible results when caulking around the home.

Selection: You can find caulk for a wide range of applications. Acrylic latex caulk is good for general uses, indoors and out. It's also easy to clean up if you make a mistake. Silicone caulk is more challenging to use but is best for sealing tile, glass and metal. Check the manufacturer's recommendations on the label to make sure you're buying the right sealant for the job.

Preparation: Caulk is packaged in sealed tubes. Embossed markings along the nozzle correspond to different bead sizes, which you can match to the joint you plan to fill. To open, snip the tip of the nozzle, cutting at an approximately 45-degree angle, and pierce the interior seal with a nail or other sharp object. To ensure that the caulk adheres properly, you should clean the area first, removing any old caulk left over from previous applications and wiping away dust.

Application: There's no exact science to caulking, but you'll develop a feel for the consistency of the material and the tension in the caulk gun. Hold the nozzle at a 45-degree angle to the joint and position the tip so the caulk adheres to the adjacent surfaces. Pull—don't push—the gun along the seam, applying the caulk 2 to 3 feet at a time. For a clean look, apply the caulk in a single, unbroken bead whenever possible. Caulk is more difficult to remove after it's dried, so keep rags handy to clean up mistakes as soon as they happen.

Completion: After you've drawn a bead along the joint, finesse the caulk into the seam. This process, known as "tooling," helps the caulk adhere to the surface while removing any rough patches. Press the caulk into the joint by running a moistened finger, paintbrush handle or other object along the surface. Because your work will likely improve as you go along, it's best to start with the least noticeable cracks and work up to the more prominent ones.

—Energy Efficiency Resource Center

Older homes in particular can benefit from sealing gaps and cracks.



SURIKAWI / DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB

Using CFLs is one of the best ways to trim lighting costs for your home.

Efficient Lighting Lowers Electric Bills

INCREASING YOUR LIGHTING efficiency is one of the easiest ways to decrease your energy bills. If you replace 25 percent of your lights in high-use areas with compact fluorescent lamps, you can cut your lighting energy bill by about 50 percent. Always look for the Energy Star label when shopping for lighting products.

Karnes Electric Cooperative offers these money-saving guidelines for lighting your home or office:

Indoor Lighting

Use energy-efficient compact fluorescent lamps in fixtures to provide high-quality and high-efficiency lighting. Fluorescent lights are much more efficient than incandescent bulbs and last six to 10 times longer. CFLs pay for themselves by saving energy over their lifetimes.

Outdoor Lighting

Many home and business owners use outdoor lighting for decoration and security. When shopping for outdoor lights, you will find a variety of products, from low-voltage pathway lighting to light-emitting diode area lighting to high-sodium, motion-detector floodlights.

Some stores also carry lights powered by small photovoltaic modules that convert sunlight directly into electricity; consider solar-powered lights for areas that are not close to an existing power supply line.

Texas Division of Emergency Management

Hurricane Preparedness Guidelines

Preparing for Hurricane Season: June 1–November 30

RESIDENTS OF Texas Gulf Coast EVACUATION ZONES should BEGIN NOW by making an evacuation plan, preparing an emergency kit and learning evacuation routes well in advance.

▶ If you have special health care needs, register by dialing 2-1-1: Gulf coast residents with special health care needs (including those who are disabled or medically fragile) who live in evacuation zones and do not have friends or family to help in an evacuation should register for assisted transportation in advance by dialing 2-1-1. The 2-1-1 transportation assistance registry must be dialed IN ADVANCE. It is confidential. Do not wait until a storm is in the Gulf to register for assistance.

▶ If you need transportation, register with 2-1-1: If you do not have a car or other vehicle, and you cannot get a ride with friends, neighbors or family, register IN ADVANCE for assisted transportation by dialing 2-1-1.

▶ Evacuation zone information: If you are interested in registering and you want to find out whether you are living in an evacuation zone, dial 2-1-1 for information.

▶ Hurricane Preparedness tips online:

Texas Division of Emergency Management Web site: www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem

FEMA Web site: www.Ready.gov

Red Cross Web site: www.redcross.org



Division de Administracion de Emergencias de Texas

Directrices para Huracanes

Preparando para la temporada de huracanes durante el 1 de junio hasta el 30 de noviembre

LOS RESIDENTES DE ZONAS DE EVACUACION de la Costa del Golfo de Texas deberan EMPEZAR AHORA a hacer un plan de evacuación, preparando un equipo de emergencia y aprendiendo bien las rutas de evacuación por adelantado.

▶ Si usted tiene necesidad especial de asistencia medica, registrese llamando al 2-1-1: Los residentes de la Costa del Golfo con necesidades especiales de asistencia medica (incluyendo los que son incapacitados o medica mente fragil) que viven en zonas de evacuación y no tienen amigos o familiares para ayudar en una evacuación deben registrarse por adelantado para la asistencia de transporte llamando al 2-1-1. El registro de asistencia de transporte se debe hacer POR ADELANTADO llamando al 2-1-1. Es confidencial. No espere hasta que una tormenta este en el Golfo para registrarse para la ayuda.

▶ Si usted necesita transporte, registrese llamando al 2-1-1. Si usted no tiene un coche ni otro tipo de vehiculo, y usted no puede obtener transporte con amigos, vecinos o familiares, registrese POR ADELANTADO para su traslado e llámame al 2-1-1.

▶ Informacion sobre la zona de evacuación: Si usted esta interesado en registrarse y quiere determinar si usted vive en una zona de evacuación, llame a 2-1-1.

▶ Para mayor informacion sobre La Preparacion para la Temporada de Huracanes en el Internet:

<http://www.listo.gov/>

<http://www.cruzrojaamericana.org/>

www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem



Water and Electricity Do Not Mix

IF YOU DON'T WANT A JOLT from your Jacuzzi, do not touch anything electric when wet, including the outlet your spa is plugged into. Wet skin and surfaces combined with electricity increase the chance of electrical shock, sometimes resulting in death.

Equip every outlet on your patio with a ground-fault circuit interrupter, just in case—if, say, while sitting in a hot tub, you reach for the temperature control and accidentally touch the plug next to it. A GFCI protects all devices plugged into it and cuts the electricity if they fall into the water or if you touch an electrical device while you are wet.

Electrical devices, such as underwater lights, pool pumps, power cords and TVs are dangerous to touch when you are wet and can be deadly if they fall into a pool or hot tub.

If you or anyone else feels a tingling sensation or suddenly can't move, that could be an electrical shock. If lights are on when they should be off, or if they are flickering, get everyone out of the water—without climbing a metal ladder. Turn off all power and call 911.

Although a hot tub may be relaxing, you should never be lax in keeping electrical appliances and cords away from it.



Think Outside the Home

AS THE HEAT BEGINS to dwindle and autumn appears on the horizon, homeowners find themselves working outdoors to ready homes for the change of season. Help prevent common outdoor electrical hazards by remembering these safety guidelines.

Power Lines

Always keep yourself and equipment at least 10 feet away from a power line. Electricity can jump to nearby objects.

Before planting trees near a power line, do some research or speak with a professional to ensure that there's enough space for it to grow. If you suspect that a tree is too close to power lines, report it to your cooperative.

Outdoor Outlets

Have all outdoor outlets equipped with ground-fault circuit interrupters, which automatically cut power when a plugged appliance comes into contact with water or "leaks" electricity. Portable GFCIs are available for use with traditional outlets.

Install weatherproof electrical boxes or covers on outdoor outlets.

Warn children—and remind yourself—to avoid outdoor outlets when they're wet or when it's raining.

Generators

Between 1999 and 2012, 79 percent of the 931 carbon monoxide fatalities in the United States were associated with generators; 24 percent of the carbon

and test them monthly.

Position the generator outside the home and away from doors, windows and vents.

Do not plug a generator directly into a home outlet without a transfer switch installed to prevent backfeeding, which could harm utility lineworkers making repairs or anyone who might come into contact with a downed power line.

Make sure your generator is properly grounded and rated to handle the load of the appliances you want it to power.

Extension Cords

Extension cords are meant to provide a temporary solution and should not be used long-term or permanently.

Never use an indoor extension cord outdoors. Outdoor cords will be labeled "For outdoor use" and are often orange.

Never attempt to extend the length of an extension cord by connecting it with another extension cord.

Be sure the amperage rating for the extension cord is higher than the amperage of the electrical product being used with it.

Only use extension cords that have been approved by a nationally recognized testing laboratory, such as UL or CSA. The laboratory's mark should appear on a tag near the cord's plug.

Additional Tips

Store fuel such as gasoline or kerosene in approved containers and away from any potential heat sources, such as a furnace or space heater or even direct sunlight.

When storing electrical products in your garage, use containers to prevent exposure to water or damage caused by animals.

If you have a swimming pool, spa or hot tub, avoid electric shock drowning by having an electrician inspect and upgrade your equipment in accordance with applicable local codes and the National Electrical Code.



Stay safe by installing weatherproof electrical boxes or covers on outdoor outlets.

Power lines are also underground. Call 811 before you dig to identify where all your underground utilities are located. Then you can avoid them when you plant trees, build fences or work on other underground projects.

monoxide fatalities associated with a generator occurred when it was used inside an attached garage or shed that was not properly ventilated.

Make sure your home is properly equipped with carbon monoxide alarms



Keep flammable items away from the stovetop.

IRENTASTAN | ISTOCK.COM



Prevent Kitchen Fires

WHEN WE THINK OF OUR KITCHENS, many of us think about the smells and tastes of our favorite foods, time together with friends and family, or even the dishes that may be waiting to be washed. However, we should also think about the importance of knowing how to prevent fires.

Here are a few tips from Safe Electricity and the U.S. Fire Administration:

- ▶ Keep appliances in good working order, and only purchase appliances that are tested and approved by certified safety labs.
- ▶ Never leave cooking unattended, and always stay alert while cooking. Inattention is the leading cause of kitchen fires according to the USFA.
- ▶ Keep anything that can catch on fire—like oven mitts, wooden utensils or food packaging—away from the stovetop.
- ▶ Keep the stovetop, burners and oven clean.
- ▶ Do not wear loose-fitting clothes or loose sleeves while cooking.
- ▶ Only use microwave-safe containers for microwave use. Never use metal or aluminum foil.
- ▶ Do not use appliances with frayed or damaged cords.
- ▶ Do not plug too many appliances into one outlet, and never use an extension cord for appliances.
- ▶ Make sure ground-fault circuit interrupters are installed in all kitchen outlets.
- ▶ Make sure to have smoke alarms around the house equipped with charged batteries.

In the kitchen, there is always potential for a fire no matter how many precautions are taken. **Here are a few safety tips to respond to small, contained fires in the kitchen:**

- ▶ In the case of a grease fire, never try to douse the flames; always smother them, such as with a lid, instead.
- ▶ If the oven catches fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed.
- ▶ With a microwave fire, turn it off immediately and keep the door closed. Unplug it if you can.
- ▶ If your clothes catch on fire, remember to stop, drop and roll.

After a fire, check appliances and have them serviced or replaced before using again.

If a fire cannot be contained, make sure to get out of the house using your planned fire escape route. Once you're safe, call the fire department immediately.

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