

# Safety: Always a Top Priority

Clark Electric Cooperative has once again earned the distinction of receiving the Rural Electric Safety Accreditation Certification Award. This marks the 21<sup>st</sup> year that the cooperative has been safety accredited. The accreditation process measures the overall effectiveness of our safety procedures, with the goal of preserving life and preventing injuries. Tim Stewart, CEO/general manager of Clark Electric Cooperative, said, “The Safety Accreditation Program helps to cultivate a culture of safety in the workplace, which is especially important in our industry. The standards, benchmarks, and concepts that the program promotes help the cooperative meet our safety goals.”

As a member, you can help us out with our safety program too. Whenever you see downed power lines, stay away from them and call us immediately. Keep an eye out for tree limbs growing into our power lines and contact us if you find them. Always call Diggers Hotline before you dig, and if you ever see something that looks unsafe, contact our office at 1-800-272-6188.

Trees can be a power line’s worst enemy. Strong winds and storms can blow trees over or break branches, pulling power lines down from poles or supporting towers. It is possible for the line to remain energized and potentially electrify the tree and nearby objects.



*Trees and power lines can be a deadly combination. If you happen to come across a tree limb that has grown into power lines or fallen across them, contact Clark Electric Cooperative immediately.*

Arcing or flashovers between power lines and trees can also cause potential damage or danger. Additional weight from snow and ice can bend or break tree branches, bringing them close enough to power lines to cause an arc or flashover. During warm weather or when power lines are carrying heavy electrical loads, they can sag, bringing them even closer to trees. The electric current caused by arcing or flashovers between power lines and trees can easily injure or even kill an individual caught nearby. It is important to pay attention to power lines in your neighborhood. Below are some tips to consider for power line safety in your neighborhood:

- Make sure to always look for nearby power lines before you begin to cut down any tree or trim branches. If a tree falls into a power line, contact Clark Electric Cooperative.
- Treat all power lines as energized. Never climb or attempt to handle a tree that has a limb caught in a power line. You may not see any visible evidence that the tree is “electrified” or dangerous.
- Make sure to maintain required clearances between equipment and power lines.
- If a fire starts from a fallen power line, notify the fire department and us. Stay away from the site of the electrical hazard. Make sure others stay clear of the line and treat it as energized.
- Do not use water on or near the fallen power line.

In addition to taking the necessary steps to respond to an electrical emergency, you can help stop potential power line problems before they start by practicing these safety measures:

- If you notice anything such as trees or branches that might interfere with power lines or pose a serious threat, please call our office.
- If you are planning to plant trees on your property, make sure not to plant them directly under or near power lines.
- Shrubs, hedges, and other plants should be kept clear of electric towers and poles.

Safety is our top priority and a way of life for us. With your help, we will continue to do the kinds of things that earn us the highest accreditation scores. ■

# Use Portable Electric Generators Safely

Portable electric generators can offer many benefits when a long-term electrical outage occurs due to a storm. However, if generators are not used properly, things could turn deadly. After Hurricane Katrina, for example, many people relied on generators. But the misuse of them caused five deaths, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC also reported 51 cases of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Follow these tips to prevent misuse of portable electrical generators:

- Be sure to follow manufacturers' directions for installation and operation.
- To prevent electric shock, make sure your generator is properly grounded. The operation manual should provide correct grounding procedures.
- Operate electric generators or other fuel-powered machines outside where deadly carbon monoxide fumes cannot enter the home.



Timothy Strickland of the United States Coast Guard and FEMA monitors a generator used in Waveland, Miss., after Hurricane Katrina. (Source: John Fleck)

- Use the generator only in a well-ventilated and dry area located away from air intakes to the house. Do not use a generator in an attached garage.
- Do not overload the generator by operating more appliances and equipment than the generator can handle. The operating instructions should have an output rating for the generator.
- Individual appliances should be plugged directly into the receptacle outlet of the generator using appropriately sized extension cords to carry the electric load. Make sure cords are in good condition and rated for outdoor use, and have a grounded, three-pronged plug.
- Do not run extension cords under rugs.
- Never connect generators directly to your home's wiring. The reverse flow of electricity can electrocute an unsuspecting utility worker.
- Never plug a generator into a household outlet.
- Do not refuel a generator while it is running.
- Only store fuel outside of living areas and away from heat sources like water heater pilot lights.
- Turn off all equipment powered by the generator before shutting it down.
- Keep children and pets away from generators. ■

Contributed by Chris Grammes, who writes on safety issues for National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. (Sources: Consumer Product Safety Commission, Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service)



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## Clark Electric Cooperative Participates in Rural Safety Day Program

Clark Electric Cooperative presented a hotline demonstration as part of the Rural Safety Day Program sponsored by the Clark County Extension Office and local high school FFA students, who help organize the event.

Students from around Clark County learned about electrical safety during the presentation. Mike Ruff, director of operations, and Scott Bailen, lineman, conducted the hotline demonstration and answered questions from the students regarding electrical safety, including what happens when something comes into contact with energized electric lines.

Other presentations during the program addressed storm spotters, tractor safety, ATV safety, and gun safety. ■



*Above: Lineman Scott Bailen demonstrates how a rope burns when it comes into contact with a power line to emphasize the dangers of flying a kite near electric lines. Left: Bailen shows how a hot dog cooks on the wire in this demonstration to illustrate the dangers of low-voltage electricity, such as the voltage in a standard household outlet. While Bailen "cooks" the hot dog, Mike Ruff, directors of operations (left), talks to the students about electrical safety.*



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# Happy 4th of July!

## **Clark Electric Cooperative and Clark Electric Appliance & Satellite will be closed Monday, July 5, in observance of the 4th of July.**

To help you celebrate our nation's birthday, we offer these fun facts from the U.S. Census Bureau:

- In July 1776, the estimated number of people living in the newly independent nation was 2.5 million. The nation's population today is more than 309 million. (Source: *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970*)
- Chances are more than 1 in 4 that the hot dogs and pork sausages consumed on the 4th of July originated in Iowa, which produces more than one-fourth of the nation's total. Chances are good that the beef hot dogs, steaks, and burgers on your backyard grill came from Texas, which accounted for about one-sixth of the nation's total production. (Source: *USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service*)
- Most of the fireworks Americans shoot off on July 4 are imported from China. One theory holds that fireworks originated in China to scare spirits away; others claim they originated in India or the Middle East. (Source: *Foreign Trade Statistics*)
- Thirty-one places in the national have the word "liberty" in their name. Iowa has four of these places—more of these places than any other state. Five places nationwide adopted the name "freedom," 11 places have the word "independence" in their name, and 31 places have "eagle" in their name. (Source: *Population estimates*)



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