

Do the Bright Thing

Clark Electric Cooperative Distributes CFL Bulbs to Members

Clark Electric Cooperative will donate 13,300 compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) through its participation in the “Do the Bright Thing” campaign.

Together with our wholesale power supplier, Dairyland Power Cooperative, Clark Electric Cooperative is encouraging energy users to “Do the Bright Thing” by providing our members with ENERGY STAR compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs. Clark Electric Cooperative will be distributing 13,300 CFL gifts by mail beginning the week of April 14 and at other special events, such as the annual meeting and our member appreciation day this October.

Clark Electric Cooperative is one of the 25 member cooperatives in the four-state Dairyland Power system. In 2008, 300,000 ENERGY STAR CFL bulbs will be distributed by Dairyland’s 25 member cooperatives, with more planned in 2009.

“Anyone interested in helping protect the environment can make a truly significant difference by choosing to conserve energy in their homes and offices. One of the best—and easiest—ways to accomplish this is by switching out standard light bulbs with energy-efficient CFL bulbs,” said Ed West, who leads Dairyland’s energy efficiency initiatives.

ENERGY STAR qualified CFLs use about 75 percent less energy than standard incandescent bulbs and last up to 10 times longer. By installing CFLs in fixtures that are used the most in your home (such as your kitchen, living room, or dining room), you can save approximately \$30 or more over the lifetime of each bulb.

Dairyland and Clark Electric Cooperative are hoping the CFL donation will encourage people to make energy efficiency a priority and change out more of their bulbs. As an example of this program’s potential impact, 300,000 19-watt CFL bulbs burned for three hours a day over the lifetime of the bulbs would save enough energy to:

- Power more than 1,200 homes for a year
- Save more than \$20 million in energy costs
- Reduce the demand for electricity in Dairyland’s cooperative system by almost 8 megawatts
- Prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions of over 21,800 cars in one year OR planting 31,000 acres of forest.



Facts about CFLs

CFLs come in a variety of shapes and sizes to meet your lighting needs. Be sure to select a CFL bulb with the correct style and wattage you need. Manufacturers include equivalency information on the packaging to help consumers choose a bulb that produces the amount of light desired for each application.

CFL Disposal

Because CFLs contain a small amount of mercury, they should be recycled. For more information on CFLs, including breakage or disposal, go to Dairyland’s web site, www.dairyland.com under the Education heading, or to www.energystar.gov. Clark Electric Cooperative will also have available to our members a convenient disposal bucket to properly dispose of your used CFL bulbs. ■



How to Clean-up a Broken Bulb

Fluorescent light bulbs contain a very small amount of mercury sealed within the glass tubing. EPA recommends the following clean-up and disposal guidelines:

Vent the Room

- Open a window and leave the room for 15 minutes or more.
- Shut off the central forced-air heating/air conditioning system, if you have one.

Clean-Up Steps for Hard Surfaces

- Carefully scoop up glass fragments and powder using stiff paper or cardboard and place them in a sealed plastic bag.
- Use sticky tape, such as duct tape, to pick up any remaining small glass fragments and powder.
- Wipe the area clean with damp paper towels or disposable wet wipes and place them in the plastic bag.
- Do not use a vacuum or broom to clean up the broken bulb on hard surfaces.

Clean-up Steps for Carpeting or Rug

- Carefully pick up glass fragments and place them in a sealed plastic bag.
- Use sticky tape, such as duct tape, to pick up any remaining small glass fragments and powder.
- If vacuuming is needed after all visible materials are removed, vacuum the area where the bulb was broken.
- Remove the vacuum bag (or empty and wipe the canister) and put the bag or vacuum debris in a sealed plastic bag. Ask your cooperative if they have a RECYCLEPAK pail or where the local recycling centers are located. If your bulb was mailed to you and it was broken, contact the cooperative for a replacement.

Disposing of CFL Bulbs After the 9-Year Life Cycle

Properly dispose of a burned out CFL by bringing the bulb to a recycling center. Your cooperative may have a RECYCLEPAK pail at their facility. Minnesota law prohibits the disposal of fluorescent bulbs in household garbage. In Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois, compact fluorescent bulbs for home use are not legally considered hazardous waste according to federal solid waste rules, but it is still best for the environment to recycle CFLs.



Light Years Ahead

2007 Energy Independence and Security Act mandates that light bulbs be 25-30% more efficient by 2014 and 70% more efficient by 2020. CFLs meet those standards today!



Bulbs That Fail Before the 9-Year Life Cycle Ends

Call the manufacturer's 800 number listed on the ballast (1.800.771.9335) and they will send a replacement bulb. You may want to write the date the CFL is installed on the base of the lamp with a permanent marker.

Change a Light Pledge

Take the pledge to change at least one light in your home with an ENERGY STAR CFL bulb and get involved in the national ENERGY STAR Change a Light, Change the World Campaign by visiting: www.energystar.gov/changealight

Mercury

CFLs contain a small amount of mercury (about 4 mg), which is roughly equivalent to an amount that would cover the tip of a ball point pen. By comparison, an older home thermometer contains 500 milligrams of mercury. Power produced from coal to supply an average 100-watt incandescent bulb three hours a day for five years will release 10 mg of mercury into the environment, compared to 2 mg of mercury to power a 19-watt CFL for the same period.

For More Information

U.S. Department of Energy - www.energy.gov

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives -

www.touchstoneenergy.cooperative

Dairyland Power Cooperative - www.dairynet.com

Sources: ENERGY STAR, EPA, Service Concepts
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DAIRYLAND POWER
COOPERATIVE

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May is Electrical Safety Month

Does Your Home Check Out for Electrical Safety?

Before you leave home in the morning, you run through a mental checklist: Keys? Lights? Blinds?

Most Americans, however, have never thought about running through a checklist that could save them from electrocution or electrical fire. May is National Electrical Safety Month. As its sponsor, the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) has created a free, downloadable checklist covering electrical issues that may exist in your home.

Covering every room from the

kitchen to the basement, the checklist guides users through their home's electrical systems with a series of questions and suggested action items. Do your lights flicker when you turn on the vacuum cleaner? Engage a licensed electrician to determine if your home has enough electrical circuits. Are you protected from electrocution that can result from electricity interacting with water? Conduct a monthly test of the ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlets in the kitchen and bathroom. ■



For more information and the rest of the Home Safety Checklist, go to <http://www.esfi.org>.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), there was an annual average of 104,500 unintentional electrical residential structure fires from 1999-2003. These resulted in approximately 500 deaths, 4,280 injuries, and nearly \$1.5 billion in property loss. CPSC's latest data (2003) indicate there were an estimated 160 electrocutions related to consumer products.

"Knowledge can save your life," said ESFI President Brett C. Brenner. "If you know the signs of an overloaded electrical circuit, or how to test a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlet, you can prevent electrocution or electrical fires."

During National Electrical Safety Month, here's how you can focus on a different electrical safety issue each week:



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Home Safety Checklist

Protect your family from fire and other electrical hazards by using this short checklist. These simple and easy steps will help you to identify and correct electrical dangers commonly found in homes.

- 1. CHECK THE WATTAGE OF ALL BULBS IN YOUR LIGHTS.**
 - Are the bulbs the appropriate wattage for the size of the fixtures? A bulb of too-high wattage may lead to fire through overheating.
- 2. CHECK ALL LAMP CORDS AND EXTENSION CORDS.**
 - Are cords placed out of the walking areas and free of furniture resting on them? Tripping hazards may result. Also, stepping on cords or placing furniture on them can cause damage and create a fire hazard.
 - Are cords in good condition (not damaged or cracked)? Shock or fire hazards can result from damaged cords. Do not attempt to repair cords yourself. Take any item with a damaged power cord to an authorized repair center, or safely dispose of the item and purchase a new one.
 - Are cords unstrapped? Tightly strapped cords can lead to overheating.
 - Are all extension cords being used only on a temporary basis? Extension cords are not as safe as permanent house wiring. Have receptacles installed where they are needed.
- 3. CHECK ALL WALL OUTLETS AND SWITCHES.**
 - Are all outlets and switches working properly? Improperly operating outlets or switches indicate that an unsafe wiring condition may exist.
 - Are all outlets and switches cool to the touch? Unusually warm outlets or switches may indicate an unsafe wiring condition exists.
 - Do you hear crackling, sizzling, or buzzing from your outlets? Call a licensed electrician to identify the cause.
 - Are all outlet and switch cover plates in good condition? Replace any missing, cracked or broken cover plate.

Need Help With Summer Cooling Costs?

Sign Up Today For Our New Central Air Incentive Program

To help and reduce the demand for electric power during the summer season, Clark Electric Cooperative is now offering members an \$8/month credit for those who choose to participate in our new air conditioner load management program. During the summer cooling months of June, July, and August, members who sign up will be able to receive this credit on their electric bill.

The air conditioning program will work just like our water heater load management program. During a high-usage day where the system demand for electricity is high, Dairyland Power Cooperative will cycle the air conditioners to relieve

the demand on the electric system.

Members who participate will be helping tremendously in keeping the cost of purchasing electricity



\$8/month credit on your electric bill during the summer season

down. When Dairyland Power has to purchase additional power during times of high demand, the cost is very high. Participating in this program is just another way of helping your cooperative.

Call Clark Electric's office to sign up; certain restrictions do apply. Once a member is signed up, a Clark Electric employee will come out to the home and install a control device on the outside air conditioner. The device operates just like the water heater controls, only it's about half the size. The device will allow for the air conditioner to be cycled on and off during the high-demand days of the summer. ■

