



September 2024

Make Time for Safety This Harvest Season

Harvest season often means putting in long hours, which can make it difficult to stay alert and on the lookout for potential hazards. Safe Electricity provides safety tips to help farmers make this harvest season a safe one.

Richard McCracken, Safe Electricity Advisory Board member, advises, “Safety starts with preparation. Be prepared for potential emergencies before the rush of harvest season begins. Have a safety plan, and make sure that farm workers and family members are aware of the procedures in it.”

Be sure that you can see well in the areas where you are working. Consider adding extra lighting around grain bins and augers.

Take the time to look up and look out for electrical lines. Always be aware of where they are in relation to your equipment. Keep a minimum of 10 feet away from all electrical equipment, and lower extensions before moving equipment. If you see a power line that is sagging or low, contact your utility. Also keep an eye out for guy wires. Although these wires are not energized, they can bring down live lines.

In equipment with auto-guidance systems, less focus is needed on steering, which may lead some drivers to think that they do not need to be as aware of navigation issues. However, even while using a GPS with auto-steering, farm workers need to keep safety in mind and stay focused on their surroundings.

“Slow down, always stay alert, and take all recommended precautions. To help you do so, recognize when you need to take breaks so that you can be active and engaged in the farm work,” says McCracken.

Additional electrical safety tips include:

- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines.
- Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Look up and use care when moving any equipment such as extending augers or raising the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Always set extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads to prevent contact with overhead lines. Grain augers should always be positioned horizontally before being moved.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.

If the machinery you are operating does make contact with a power line, stay on the equipment. Immediately call 911, warn others

to stay away, and wait for the utility crew to cut the power.

Only on the rare occasion that the machinery catches fire should you leave the vehicle after contact is made. If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the ground and machinery at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area. Never touch anything that is in contact with a power line.

“Remember, while harvest is a busy season on the farm, it’s still important to take the time to keep safety first and look out for and stay safely away from potential hazards like overhead power lines,” adds McCracken.

For more information on electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

5 Tips for a Safe Harvest

Electrical safety during harvest season requires vigilance and proactive measures. Follow these tips to reduce the risk of electrical accidents.

1. Maintain at least a 10-foot distance from power lines when operating equipment like grain augers, elevators and other tall machinery.
2. Use a spotter to navigate safely around power lines and other electrical equipment.
3. Ensure all farm workers are trained on electrical safety procedures.
4. Regularly inspect all electrical equipment and machinery for signs of wear and damage.
5. Keep first aid kits and emergency contact numbers in an easily accessible location.





Cold Weather Rule Outlines

Process to Avoid Winter

Disconnection & Loss of Electricity

The state's Cold Weather Rule guides utilities on winter disconnections as long as customers follow these main guidelines.

Residential Customer Notice

An electric cooperative must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a home between October 1 and April 30 if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit **and all of the following conditions are met:**

1. The household income of the customer is at or below 50 percent of the state median household income. The electric cooperative may verify income on forms it provides or obtain verification of income from the local energy assistance provider. A customer meets the income requirements of this clause if the customer receives any public assistance, including energy assistance that uses an income eligibility threshold set at or below 50 percent of the state median household income;
2. A customer enters into and makes reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household; and
3. A customer receives referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation or other programs likely to reduce the customer's energy bills. In addition, an electric cooperative must, between August 15 and October 1 of each year, notify all residential customers of these provisions.

Before disconnecting service to a residential customer between October 1 and April 30, an electric cooperative must provide:

1. A notice of the proposed disconnection;
2. A statement with the customer's rights and responsibilities;
3. A list of local energy assistance providers;
4. Forms on which to declare an inability to pay; and
5. A statement explaining available time-payment plans and other options to secure continued utility service.

Emergency energy assistance phone numbers

Des Moines Valley Health & Human Services (Cottonwood County).....	831-1891
Des Moines Valley Health & Human Services (Jackson County)	847-4000
Jackson County Sheriff's Department	847-4420
Martin County Human Services	238-4757
Martin County Sheriff's Department	238-4481
MN Dept. of Energy Services (Ask for fuel assistance).....	1-800-657-3805
Minnesota Valley Action Council	1-800-767-7139
Brown County	354-3138
Martin County	238-1663
Watonwan County	375-5748
Salvation Army's Heat Share (Jackson & Martin Co.)	238-9797
Watonwan County Human Services.....	375-3294
United Community Action Partnership (Jackson & Cottonwood Co.)...	1-800-992-1710

If you live in an area that is not listed, call your electric co-op for details.

The Difference Between Baseload and Intermittent Power *and Why It Matters*

By Scott Flood

It's one of those excruciating days when the warm air becomes unbearable. You crank up the air conditioner on the way home from work, and the first thing you do when you get home is turn the thermostat down a couple degrees.

Throughout your area and the entire region, thousands of other people are responding the same way. Every air conditioner and fan start working at full speed to keep everyone cool and comfortable. The end of the workday creates a massive surge in the amount of electricity needed to meet the demand, and it's up to the people who oversee the operation of North America's power grid to make sure there's an adequate amount to keep you comfortable.

It's a challenging task because the amount of electricity that's needed varies throughout each day. While you and your neighbors are asleep, the demand is lower, but as everyone wakes up, turns on the shower, and starts the coffeemaker, the demand for power climbs quickly.

Our electric grid gathers and distributes power from many sources, including power plants that convert fossil fuels like coal, natural gas and oil into electricity; nuclear power plants; and renewable energy sources, such as wind turbines, solar farms, hydroelectric dams and even landfills. The electricity supplied from all of these sources is categorized as baseload, peaking or intermediate power.

Baseload power accounts for most of the electricity we use. Always-available power sources are designed to constantly generate large amounts of power, so you and everyone else is assured of a reliable supply of electricity whenever you need it. The most familiar

examples of baseload sources are nuclear and fossil-fuel power plants, along with some hydroelectric and geothermal facilities. While baseload plants provide an affordable and dependable source of power, they're not engineered to keep up with sudden changes in electricity demand. The companies operating them are unable to turn them on or off quickly.

When the demand for electricity shifts—either gradually or suddenly—grid operators turn to either intermediate or peaking power plants. These plants are designed to startup quickly and adapt their power output to meet the varying demand. In most cases, peaking plants supply more frequent and sudden changes, whereas intermediate plants supply more gradual or slower changes.

Renewable power sources such as solar and wind farms are increasingly used to supply electricity. Both sources provide intermittent power since the amount of electricity generated and the time at which electricity is generated depend upon cooperation from nature. Solar panels can't generate electricity when there's not enough sunlight, and large wind turbines generally don't produce power until the wind speed reaches at least 13 miles per hour. Because intermittent power sources like wind and solar depend on unpredictable weather conditions, they can't be relied upon to deliver predictable and constant baseload power. This is why changes in electricity demand are usually met with intermediate or peaking generation powered by more traditional sources like natural gas.

Electric co-op members who are concerned about climate change may wonder why power suppliers aren't rushing to replace fuels such


as coal and natural gas with environmentally-friendlier alternatives like wind and solar. If co-ops and other electric utilities switched completely to intermittent sources, they wouldn't be able to meet consumers' needs for reliable power.

One promising technology involves the development of energy storage devices such as batteries that can be used to store excess power generated by wind and solar so it's available even when the weather isn't cooperating. While that technology is advancing, it's still evolving, and large-scale use of such batteries is many years away. Batteries also require large amounts of elements such as lithium that must be mined, creating additional environmental concerns.

While electric co-ops are working hard to shift to environmentally-friendlier sources, the realities of differing power needs are why most maintain a diverse mix of energy sources and fuels. Co-op members can help by taking steps to reduce their own energy use. For example, switching to more-efficient lighting and appliances will not only reduce your monthly electric bill, but it can reduce the amount of electricity that's needed.

Contact your local electric co-op to learn more about practical ways you can use less electricity without sacrificing comfort and convenience. The less power we all use, the less the power producers will have to generate.

For more than four decades, business writer Scott Flood has worked with electric cooperatives to build knowledge of energy-related issues among directors, staff and members. Scott writes on a variety of energy-related topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing nearly 900 electric co-ops



Renewable power sources such as solar and wind farms are increasingly used to supply electricity. Both sources provide intermittent power since the amount of electricity generated and the time at which electricity is generated depend upon cooperation from nature.

2024 REBATE

PROGRAMS



Recipient must be a South Central Electric member. Any checks or credits will be made in the name or account of the member. The program will end when funds are exhausted; additional rebates may be added at a later date. The completed applications will be processed on a first come first served basis as they are received in our office. Rebate applications can be requested by calling the St. James office or available on line at www.southcentralelectric.com.

REBATES:



Must be an Energy Star[®] appliance to qualify.

Please see rebate applications for details.

Dehumidifier	\$20	Credit applied to the energy bill
Air Source Heat Pumps	\$350	HSPF rating over 9.5 \$600
Ductless Heat Pump	\$350	HSPF rating over 9.5 \$600
Ground Source Heat Pump	\$350/ton	(Limit 10 tons)
Air Conditioner Tune Up	\$30	
Managed Electric Heat	\$20/kW	
Radio controlled, qualifies for discount of \$.031/kWh on system usage. Stored or dual fuel heat. Heat pumps are not eligible for this program.		
LED Yard Light	\$25/ea.	limit 3

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL REBATES:

Rebates are available on a custom basis. Rebates will be based on kW reduction on retrofit projects. To be eligible for a rebate the project must have a minimum savings of 1kW. We do not have rebate programs for new construction. Call SCEA for information on these rebates.

Protect your home and family with a Briggs & Stratton home standby generator



You can be confident that South Central Electric works hard every day to keep your lights on. For those times when mother nature strikes, we still have you covered with our generator program. You can purchase a whole home Briggs & Stratton Power Protect generator from South Central Electric. If you lose power, the generator automatically takes over. When power is restored, it automatically shuts down. Power when you need it without the hassles of portable or PTO generators.

Estimated Cost of \$8,500 to \$12,000 includes:

- Briggs & Stratton[®] Power Protect DX with industry leading 10-year warranty.
- Minnesota winter ready with battery warmer, oil heater & battery charger.
- Automatic transfer switch.
- Electrician installation.



Call our office to learn more at
(507) 375-3164



Official monthly newsletter

South Central Electric

71176 Tiell Dr., PO Box 150
St. James, MN 56081-0150
(507) 375-3164

Outages: (888) 805-7232

E-mail address:

sce@southcentralelectric.com

Web:

www.southcentralelectric.com

Office hours:

7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Ron Horman, General Manager

Board of Directors

President, Ron Jorgenson
Vice President, Michael Miest
Secretary, Brad Asendorf
Treasurer, Matt Peters
Brent Imker, Director
Mark Sandberg, Director
Bill Kunz, Director

The Board meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at South Central Electric's building at 71176 Tiell Dr., St. James, MN.

Please see our website for a summary of the board meetings.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

VISIT
OUR WEBSITE!

www.southcentralelectric.com

FOLLOW US
on Facebook!



Generators run on LP or Natural Gas. Estimate does not include costs of gas installation from your gas provider.