



# 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.

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

## Emergency Energy Assistance Phone Numbers

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



## Stay Alert: Electrical Safety During Harvest

South Central Electric reminds everyone on the farm—whether you're a dump truck driver, a teenager, or a seasoned worker—that electrical hazards can be deadly. Harvest means long hours and high stress, but safety must come first.

Key tips to stay safe:

- Always look up for power lines. Even coming close can cause electricity to arc.
- Review power line locations daily with everyone on-site.
- Lower truck beds and augers before moving

equipment.

- Create drop zones away from overhead lines.
- If equipment contacts a line: stay inside, call 911, and keep others 50 feet away.
- If forced to exit, jump clear and hop away with feet together to avoid step potential.
- Always load/unload grain bins on the side without power lines.

When in doubt, call South Central Electric. It's better to check than risk a life.



# Peter Nickel Chosen to Represent Co-op on Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.



This year, Peter Nickel was selected as the Youth Tour delegate from our service area. Over the course of the trip, Peter visited iconic landmarks such as the Capitol Building, memorials, and Smithsonian museums, while also meeting with fellow students from across the nation to discuss leadership and community involvement.

*Reflecting on the experience, Peter shared:*

*"It was the best trip I have ever been on. I enjoyed the history of the different historical sites. It was a privilege to meet with many of the students from other states and just share common interests. I am very grateful and glad to have been able to go. Thank you all for putting on this trip and making it as fun as possible."*

Each year, electric cooperatives across the country partner with the **National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)** to send select high school students on the **Youth Tour**—an all-expenses-paid trip to **Washington, D.C.** designed to cultivate leadership, civic engagement, and a deeper understanding of American government.

We're incredibly proud of Peter for representing our cooperative with enthusiasm and curiosity.

If you know a high school student who might be interested in this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, please have them contact our office to learn more about how to apply for next year's Youth Tour.



**If you have changed or added phone numbers, please contact South Central Electric to update your contact information.**



## ONLINE PAYMENT & BILLING w/ SMARTHUB

Pay your bills on-line with South Central Electric's on-line bill payment system, SmartHub. Download the SmartHub app for your mobile device or tablet from the APP Store or Google Play.

To get started visit our web site [southcentralelectric.com](http://southcentralelectric.com) and click on the SmartHub logo. Once you are at the SmartHub site you'll have to sign up as a first time user by clicking the "New User" link and follow the prompts.

# Power Lines and Trees: Smart Planting for a Safer Landscape

*Trees add beauty to any landscape, but they can be dangerous if they are located too close to power lines. Learn about power company tree management and how best to locate trees on your property.*

Trees add beauty to any landscape, but they also have impressive practical benefits. They clean the air, reduce carbon dioxide and (when positioned correctly) provide protection from wind and sun, reducing heating and cooling costs. If a tree grows too close to a power line, however, it can cause power outages and become a life-threatening danger.

## A Growing Problem

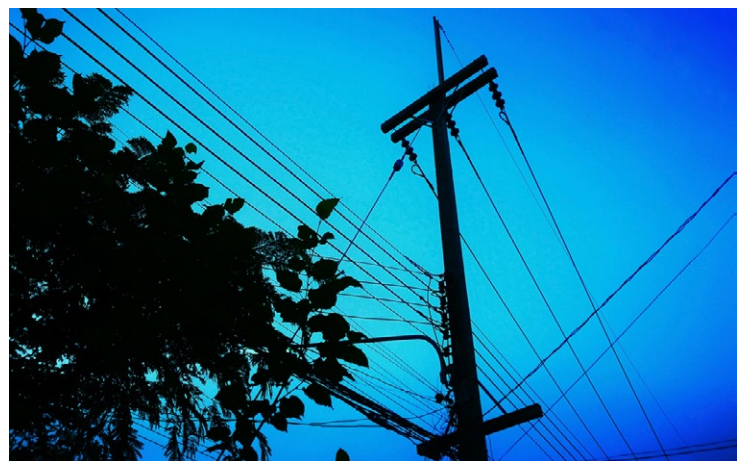
Trees that grow or fall into power lines are the single largest cause of power outages, according to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Problems can occur suddenly, such as when a branch breaks during a wind or ice storm. Issues can also develop over time through natural growth patterns, with growing branches crowding or rubbing against power lines.

Trees located near power lines represent a real threat to children who may be tempted to climb them, or to homeowners attempting to tackle a tree-trimming job on their own. Limbs and branches that come into contact with power lines may become energized.

## Trimming Back

To improve safety and reduce the risk of power outages, South Central Electric maintains a vigilant program of tree and brush removal and trimming. Trimming is performed according to directional pruning techniques that meet the standards and practices of the Tree Care Industry Association and other groups.

Directional pruning guides new growth away from power lines. Limbs or portions of limbs growing near power lines are trimmed back to the main branch or trunk, where they would naturally shed if the limbs died from natural causes. This pruning method preserves the tree's natural defense system and minimizes impact



on the crown. In some situations, an entire tree is removed. Tree removal may be necessary because the tree is leaning toward a power line or has a structural defect that increases its risk of falling.

## Right Place, Right Tree

Adding trees to your landscape? Carefully consider different tree species and how they may affect power lines on your grounds. No tree should be planted near high-voltage transmission lines. Some species, however, normally grow to a mature height of 20 feet or less. These include:

- Crabapple
- Flowering Dogwood
- Hawthorne
- Bristlecone Pine
- Common Juniper
- Trident, Amur, Paperback and Tartarian Maples
- Rose Acacia

These species can typically provide an attractive addition to your landscape without interfering with distribution lines. The following species, however, grow particularly tall and should be planted no closer than 60 feet from distribution lines:

- Oak
- Colorado Blue Spruce
- Silver and Norway Maples
- Most pine species

If you're planning a landscape project, overhead power lines are not your only concern. Knowing where utility lines are buried can help you avoid injury, service outages and costly repairs. Call 811 to have underground lines marked before you dig. If you notice trees in the powerline near your property, please give our office a call.

## SCEA WATER HEATER PROGRAM

SCEA's peak shave water heater program provides members with a Marathon water heater at a discounted price for participating in the load management program.

The cost for water heaters is **\$750**. This is a great value for members. SCEA pays the cost of the electrician to wire the water heater and radio control. The member would pay any costs incurred by a plumber.







# 2025 REBATE PROGRAMS

The 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 online at [www.southcentralelectric.com](http://www.southcentralelectric.com).

## REBATES:

Please see rebate applications for details.



*Must be an Energy Star® appliance to qualify.*

- Dehumidifier** ..... **\$20** Credit applied to the energy bill
- Air Source Heat Pumps (ducted)** ..... **\$300** HSPF rating over 9.5 **\$500**
- Ductless/Mini-Split Heat Pump**..... **\$350**
- Ground Source Heat Pump**..... **\$300/ton** (*Limit 10 tons*)
- Air Conditioner Tune Up** ..... **\$30**
- Managed Electric Heat**..... **\$20/kW**

Radio controlled, qualifies for a 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.

### ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Take advantage of “shoulder months,” which refer to the transitional periods between peak heating and cooling seasons. During the fall, these milder weeks typically occur between September and November. Shoulder months offer a great opportunity to reduce home energy consumption as the need for extensive heating or cooling is reduced. Look for simple ways to boost indoor comfort without running your heating and cooling system. Use ceiling fans and open windows on breezy days to ventilate your home. On cooler days, add a layer of clothing and avoid running the heat.





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**South Central Electric**

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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](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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).



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