Clinton County Connection

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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Mother Nature's wrath can mean service disruptions

Although we work hard to maintain our equipment, monitor power delivery 24/7, and do all we can to keep the lights on, there are circumstances beyond our control that can interfere with power delivery. Winter weather is one example. Winter storms can impact the distribution of electricity due to ice, heavy winds, sleet and other extreme conditions. Regardless of the reason, know that when the lights go out, even during extreme weather, we are doing all we can to safely and efficiently restore power.

Along with causing outages, wintery conditions can cause hiccups with power delivery that include blinking lights, or ebbs and flows in the amount of power that comes into your home. Although blinking lights can be a symptom of other problems such as loose wiring connections or overloaded circuits, they can also be caused by extreme weather.

ICE/FREEZING RAIN

Ice accumulation on power lines makes them heavy. Half an inch of ice can add as much as 500 pounds to a power line. This added weight can impact power distribution and even bring down a power line. Ice that forms on power lines also increases its surface area, which means gusts of wind have more to catch. The weight of ice on tree limbs can cause them to fall on power lines as well.

WIND

Wind can cause tree branches to brush power lines, which can result in blinking or flickering lights. Therefore, it's important for us to keep trees cleared around power lines and poles. In addition, heavy winds can cause lines to move and sway. If they gain enough momentum, they can gallop or jump. This can cause disruptions in service since the motion can cause lines to break or make contact with each other.

MELTING ICE

Melting ice can be heavy, putting extra strain on power lines and causing the lines to touch or rest on one another. Because of this, melting ice can cause outages even though the temperature is rising. Depending on conditions, melting ice can cause as many or more problems than the ice itself.

TREE BRANCHES

In any weather, tree-related issues cause the most power outages in many service areas. Branches, limbs or even tree trunks can fall into power lines and cause problems. Add wind, freezing rain or ice to the mix for an increased potential for problems.

ICY ROADS

Vehicles sliding on ice or collide with one another can strike a power pole or pad-mounted transformer, causing an outage or other problems.

BLIZZARDS

Heavy snowfall, icy roads or reduced visibility can make it difficult for our crews to get out and fix problems. We do all we can to get out there to address service issues as soon as possible.

Be sure to have a storm preparedness kit ready before a storm strikes to help get you and your family through a power outage. Items to gather include bottled water, non-perishable food, blankets, warm clothing, hand sanitizer, first aid kit/medicine, flashlight, radio, back-up phone chargers, extra batteries and toiletries.

To learn more about preparing for storms and electrical safety, go to SafeElectricity.org.

Grants Awarded

Grants totaling $3,000 were awarded to area teachers through the Touchstone Energy 2020/2021 Classroom Empowerment Grant Program. Clinton County Electric Cooperative awarded checks to the participants below. (Not pictured is Mater Dei Catholic High School teacher Doug Denaro. Due to COVID restrictions, Denaro's $500 check was mailed to the school.)

A check for $1,000 was presented to Wesclin High School on behalf of grants written by teacher Brad Burcham and special ed teacher Heather Klein. Pictured left to right CCEC customer service representative Carrie Trame, Klein and Burcham.

Germantown Elementary pre-k teacher Becky Hitpas (left), kindergarten teacher Cheri Markwell and third grade teacher Dawn Strake accepted a $1,500 check from CCEC customer service representative Carrie Trame (right).

REMEMBER ELECTRICAL SAFETY

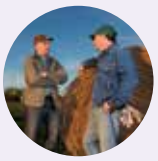
As you prepare for planting season, don't forget to plan for safety. There are many aspects to safety on the farm, but electrical safety is often overlooked. Keep these safety tips in mind as you prepare for planting:

TRAIN OTHERS

Train anyone working on your farm, including family members and seasonal workers, about electrical hazards.

SAFETY FIRST

Have daily meetings to review the day's work and discuss safety implications. Know and review where the power lines are, the clearance required, and the proper position of extensions as they are transported.



WAIT TO UNFOLD

Remind workers to fold or unfold extensions well into the field, not close to the field's edge where power lines are typically located.

USE A SPOTTER

When working in the vicinity of power lines, always have a spotter on the ground, who can direct you away from power lines or poles if you are getting too close.

DO NOT EXIT YOUR CAB

If your machine or truck makes contact with a power line, pole, or guy wire, you could become electricity's path to ground and become electrocuted if you step out of the cab.

CALL 9-1-1

Call 9-1-1 to have your electric utility dispatched to de-energize the power source. Only exit the cab if your equipment is on fire. If that happens, make a solid jump out and hop away with feet together as far as you can.

For more information: SafeElectricity.org

NEVER ENTER FLOOD WATERS

When floods happen, news reports often show homeowners and reporters standing in or rowing through flood waters.

This is a BAD IDEA. Flood waters can cover downed power lines or other electrical hazards, and the combination of water and electricity can cause shock or electrocution.

Here are some safety reminders:

- Never enter flood waters; this includes on foot or by any other means such as a boat or canoe.
- Electrical hazards such as downed power lines could be lurking underneath the standing water.
- Do not enter a flooded basement if water could be covering outlets, appliances, or electrical cords.
- Do not touch electrical equipment such as wires, switches or fuses if you are wet or standing in water or on a damp surface.

Cleaning up can also be dangerous:

- Downed and deadly power lines can be hiding under branches and debris.
- Do not use electric yard tools if it is raining or the ground is wet.
- Replace water-damaged electronics and equipment.
- Always be aware of power line locations when using or carrying ladders, poles, or any other extendable or long tools.
- Be aware of power line locations each time you are elevated, for example: on a ladder, rooftop, or boom lift.

Considering Solar?
Call us first!

As interest in "green" energy and ways to save money on utility bills continue to grow, some cooperative members may be considering the installation of a solar array.

Since these types of systems have the capability of returning electricity back to the electric grid, there are some major safety considerations to sort through before a system is installed.

Before deciding to buy a solar array, examine the economics to determine if such a system will lower your monthly electricity costs. If you do decide to install a solar array, contact our office as early as possible in the process.

A CCEC representative will provide information on our interconnection process and policies, as well as answer any questions you may have. That way, you and your installer will have the information needed as you progress with your system.

For more information on CCEC policies and requirements, please contact our office Monday through Friday, between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. at 800-526-7282.

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