

# EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

*Echoes of the Empire*

JANUARY 2024

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## WINTER OUTAGE SAFETY

BY ANDY CARTER MEMBER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

Power outages are never convenient, but if they happen during cold weather, they can be more than just a nuisance. Being prepared for an outage during a winter storm is important and something every Empire Electric Association member should think about.

Keeping an eye on the weather forecast is an important part of being prepared. A convenient way to keep up with winter storm warnings or other local emergencies is to subscribe to your county's emergency management notification system so that you can automatically receive alerts. You might also want to have a battery-operated radio available (with extra batteries) as another way to listen for updates during the storm.

Knowing a storm is on the way can give you time to take care of essential preparation steps such as making sure your vehicle's fuel tank is full and you have plenty of the fuel you use to heat your home, such as wood pellets or propane.



ANDY CARTER

Basic supplies you should have at home for any winter storm include nonperishable food, plenty of drinking water, and a first-aid kit. When considering preparations for an outage during a winter storm, you should also have a flashlight with spare batteries or candles. Be cautious when using candles by making sure they are not near combustible materials and cannot be knocked over.

You should also think about an alternate heat source that does not require electricity provided by EEA. Follow directions and safety precautions for any alternate heat source. Be cautious! Anything that burns

## EEA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

# 2024


Deadline is February 15, 2024



- PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS
- GRADUATING HOME SCHOOL SENIORS
- ADULT
- LINEMAN
- ELECTRICAL RELATED TRADE

Complete your application on our website at eea.coop



 "Fog Captures the Mesa in a Blanket" by Sandra Bryan



## Monthly Calendar

**January 1** – EEA's office will be closed to celebrate the New Year's Day holiday.

**January 12** – EEA's board meeting begins at 8:30 a.m. at its headquarters in Cortez. The agenda is posted 10 days in advance of the meeting at eea.coop. Members may attend in person or remotely. Instructions to attend remotely are included on the agenda.

**January 15** – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

# WINTER OUTAGE SAFETY



▲ The only safe way to connect a portable generator to your home is by using a transfer switch. Photo courtesy of SafeElectricity.org

uses the oxygen from the space it is in; if the products of combustion are not vented outside, they can accumulate and become deadly. Never use a charcoal grill, a propane or kerosene heater, or any other device not designed to be used in an enclosed space to heat your home. If you do plan to use a heater designed to heat enclosed spaces, we suggest you install a carbon monoxide detector to warn you if levels exceed safe limits.

In addition to having basic supplies, an additional way to be prepared for a winter power outage is to use a backup generator to supply power until EEA can restore power to your service. Backup generators can either be permanently connected or be a portable unit you put in place when an outage happens. Most permanently installed backup generators have an automatic transfer switch that detects the outage. It will automatically disconnect your service from the EEA grid and connect to the generator. The transfer switch ensures that the generator is not back-feeding power to the grid while our crews are restoring power.

Portable backup generators should only be connected through a transfer switch to power your home. These transfer switches are normally manual, allowing you to choose power from the EEA grid

or your portable generator. You should never connect your portable generator to your home by using a modified extension cord with male connections on each end. If grid power is restored while you are connected and operating the generator, it will be damaged because it will not be synchronized with EEA. It may also damage appliances in your home. The circuit you plug into may also not be rated to carry the output from your generator and can damage the wiring in your home.

Some members think opening their main breaker is a safe alternative to a transfer switch, but it is not. Circuit breakers are protective devices and are not designed to be switches. Breakers can also be inadvertently switched on by someone not aware of why you had them off. If you want to connect a portable generator to your home, the safest way is to have a transfer switch installed by a licensed electrician. If you do not have a transfer switch, a safer alternative is to power individual appliances connected directly to your generator. If you choose this option, be sure to use extension cords rated to power the size of the appliances you are running.

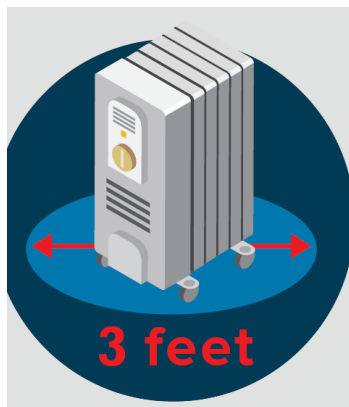
And last: if you are powering your home with a portable generator, never use it indoors. Make sure it is not close to any windows, doorways, or air-intake vents. Do not use it in an attached garage, even

with the doors up. Never touch it with wet hands or use it in areas with rain, snow, or standing water.

Please remember that electrical safety is not just something for our crews to consider. Safe use of electricity is everyone's concern and we want to make sure you are well informed when it comes to being prepared for winter outages. Following established safety guidelines and codes not only protects you but it also protects our employees as they work to serve you. More outage information and generator safety can be found at [eea.coop/prepare-outage](http://eea.coop/prepare-outage).



▲ EEA recommends you have a carbon monoxide detector if you use any heating source that is not all electric. Photo courtesy of SafeElectricity.org



## Heat your home safely.

Keep anything that can burn 3 feet away from a fireplace, wood stove or space heater.







Use a GFCI outlet to power heat tape. Photo courtesy of SafeElectricity.org

## How to Safely Use Heat Tape

Below-zero temperatures can cause pipes to freeze and burst, resulting in a huge mess and expensive repairs. One way to help prevent pipes from bursting is to use heat tape, a product that uses electricity to generate heat.

Although not adhesive, heat tape acts as a heating pad for exposed pipes. There are two installation methods. The first and less common method is when the tape is hard-wired to a home's electrical system and has its own breaker. In this case, the tape should be installed by a licensed contractor.

The second installation method uses heat tape that plugs directly into a ground fault circuit interrupter outlet. This type

of tape typically allows you to control the temperature.

If you are considering installing heat tape, extra care should be taken.

- Due to its potential to overheat and cause a fire, do not use heat tape on pipes behind walls or ceilings. It should only be used for exposed pipes, such as those found in your crawl space or outside your home.
- Select the right kind of tape for your pipes. If you use tape designed for PVC on metal pipes, it will not be as effective. If you use heat tape designed for metal on PVC pipes, it can melt them.
- Always purchase heat tape that is backed by a reputable testing lab, such as Underwriter

Laboratories, and do not use tape, cords, or plugs that are damaged or worn.

Heat tape uses electricity and will have an impact on your monthly bill. Heat tape power consumption varies from 3 to 10 watts per foot. If you are using a 10-foot heat tape that uses 5 watts per foot to keep a small section of pipe from freezing and it operates 24/7, it will add approximately \$3 to your monthly bill if you are on the Time of Use Demand rate, and \$3.18 on the All Energy rate. If you are using heat tape to prevent ice dams on your roof, the length and wattage are typically larger and can cost quite a bit more. Assuming the heat tape has temperature control and operates 17 hours per day, 100 feet of 9-watt-per-foot heat tape would cost approximately \$29 per month on the TOU Demand rate, and more than \$40 on the All Energy rate.

Periodically check your heat tape to make sure it is working properly and the cord has not become damaged. It's also a good idea to test the GFCI outlet using the built in test button. Lastly, when winter is over make sure you unplug or turn off the heat tape so you are not wasting energy.

**ON-PEAK**

Monday through Saturday  
1:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

*January 1 - On Peak Hours have been shortened!*

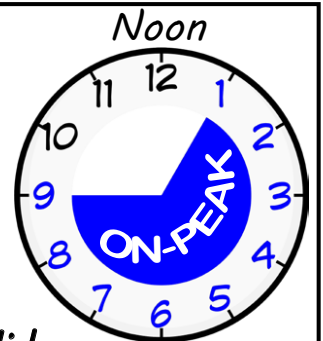
**OFF-PEAK**

Monday through Saturday  
9:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

*Off-Peak is also All Day Sunday and the following Holidays:*

*New Year's Day • Memorial Day • 4th of July • Labor Day*

*Thanksgiving Day • Christmas Day • If one of the holidays occurs on a Monday through Saturday, the entire holiday is Off-Peak.*



# 4 SAFETY TIPS

## ALL DRIVERS NEED TO KNOW



### 1 THAT TEXT CAN WAIT

When texting while driving, the shortest amount of time a person takes his or her eyes off the road is five seconds. At 55 mph, that is like driving the length of a football field with your eyes closed.

### 2 DON'T GET OUT

If you are in a car accident involving a power line or padmount transformer ("green box"), stay inside the vehicle and call 9-1-1. Unless the car is on fire or giving off smoke, do not get out. If there is a fire, make a solid jump from the vehicle without touching it and hop with your feet together as far away as you can.

### 3 RESPECT WORK ZONES

One work zone crash occurs every 5.4 minutes. Remind teen drivers to consider anyone doing their job in or near the road as someone they know and love. Encourage them to move over and slow down for workers.

### 4 DON'T DRIVE DISTRACTED

Texting is not the only form of distracted driving. Driving and doing anything else is multitasking. Eight deaths occur EVERY DAY due to drivers who drive distracted.

Learn more:  **SafeElectricity.org**



## 2024 Electrify & Save Program Update



EEA offers incentives for beneficial electrification products that can make your life easier and more comfortable while helping reduce your overall energy cost. The incentives are offered in partnership with Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, our wholesale power supplier. The 2024 Electrify & Save program will offer the same rebates as in 2023 with a few changes in requirements and incentive amounts. The new 2024 guidelines can be found at [eea.coop/electrify-save-program](http://eea.coop/electrify-save-program). Heat pump incentives have changed the most and information can be found at [eea.coop/2024-heat-pumps](http://eea.coop/2024-heat-pumps). You can use the QR code to the right to easily navigate to our Electrify & Save web page.



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

During winter months, ensure your home is well sealed to reduce the need for excessive heating. Seal air leaks around your home and add insulation where needed to save up to 10% on annual energy bills.

Install weather stripping on exterior doors and apply caulk around windows. Check attic insulation levels and hire a qualified contractor if additional insulation is required.

Source: [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov)



## SAFETY TIP

Start discussions about electrical equipment and safety when children are young. When babyproofing your home, don't forget about potential electrical hazards. Learn child safety tips at [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

