

# PLAYING IT SAFE ONLINE

BY RYAN ELARTON GENERAL MANAGER

In today's world, most of us don't leave the front door unlocked. We protect our homes, loved ones, and valuables from intruders with locks, alarms, and other security measures. Cybersecurity is no different. It's the practice of protecting other valuables such as your identity, banking, health records, and other sensitive information from digital attacks and theft.

Amidst trying to keep new year's resolutions and being grateful for the loved ones in our lives, February is an excellent time for a cybersecurity check up. Taking necessary steps to protect our personal information is a year-round practice at San Isabel Electric.

According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency, an agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security that is responsible for strengthening cybersecurity and infrastructure protection, below are the four best ways to keep you and your family safe online.

1. **Implement multi-factor authentication** (also known as two-step verification) on your accounts. The additional layer of protection makes it much harder for criminals to access your information. Even if hackers obtain your password, they may be unable to access your accounts if multistep verification is enabled.
2. **Update your software.** This is one of the easiest ways to protect your personal data. When downloading a software update, make sure it's coming straight from the company that created it. Beware of fake pop-ups that request urgent downloads. Better yet, turn on automatic updates.
3. **Think before you click.** Most successful cyber attacks start with a phishing email. Don't take the bait when cyber criminals go phishing. Avoid emails (or texts) that look too good to be true, oddly urgent, poorly crafted, or include unusual requests.
4. **Create strong passwords** using long, unique, and complex words or phrases. Consider using a password manager to save time. Some password managers can work across all devices, protect your identity, and notify you of potential phishing websites.

## FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD

Just as you would talk with your children about safety in the physical world, discuss ways to stay safe online.

Help them understand the public nature of the internet. Young people need to know early on that what is shared online stays online and is difficult (if not impossible) to take back. Just as you would guard your money or valuables, children need to learn to guard their personal information, especially on social networks. As a parent or guardian, help your children learn about and use the privacy and security settings on social networks and gaming sites.

## KEEPING THE ELECTRIC GRID AND YOUR DATA SECURE

In addition to keeping your kids and family safe online, we at San Isabel Electric are working to boost our own cybersecurity efforts. We're doing our share on the cyber front. Part of offering excellent service is keeping that service secure and reliable. For San Isabel Electric, reliability means repairing wear-and-tear, upgrading our equipment to withstand storms and severe weather, and using technology and best practices to keep our system secure from cybersecurity issues.

We also work together with co-ops across the country to develop new technologies and infrastructure, learn from each other, and keep the grid's network secure. For example, we participate in simulated exercises, where co-ops around the country come together to simulate realistic cyber issues and practice responding to the latest types of issues we might have to manage.

While we can't stop a storm or predict every disruption, as a co-op we do everything we can to keep the lights on and our members protected. Because if we all do our part, our interconnected world will be safer and more secure for everyone.



RYAN ELARTON

## Understanding Changes That Will Affect Your Electric Bill



## SERVING YOU IN 2024 RATE CHANGE NOTICE

- ⚡ The new residential grid access charge went from \$25 to \$30 effective January 1, 2024.
- ⚡ There is no change to the energy usage charge (kilowatt hour – kWh rate) for any rate class.

Purchased power, maintaining our lines, swift outage responses, grid protection investments, and energy-efficiency support all come with increased costs. San Isabel Electric is dedicated to minimizing bill increases and recognizes the impact on member-owners. We are committed to continue providing excellent service.

 We're here to help along the way, visit [siesa.com/rates](https://siesa.com/rates) to learn more.

**THE ETS  
LEGENDS  
EXCHANGE**

THE SEARCH FOR THE OLDEST ETS HEATER

**WE HAVE A TIE!**

We found two ETS heaters from 1995!



**Oldest ETS Heater Contest Winners Announced**

SIEA is pleased to announce the winners of our first Oldest Electric Thermal Storage Unit contest — and it's a tie! Both ETS heaters had been faithfully providing warmth for an impressive 28 years!

In 2023, SIEA launched a new exchange and upgrade program for ETS systems. ETS member-owners who exchange their old ETS heater for a new upgraded model will receive a \$250 credit.

As a token of our appreciation, the member who exchanged the oldest ETS for an upgraded one by the year's end got an additional \$250 bonus bill credit.

Nancy Schricker of Beulah and Gaylene Smith of Cuchara both had ETS heaters manufactured in 1995. And both were working just fine.

In case you've never heard of it, ETS heating is an electric heating system that can help decrease your heating costs by storing heat when electricity costs are lower, and then releasing the heat throughout the day. ETS heaters are 100% efficient, designed to provide low-cost heat, 24 hours per day. By using electricity during off-peak hours — times when demand is lower and electricity is cheaper — ETS heaters provide heat at lower costs than most other energy sources.

"My old ETS worked very well and reliably up until this year, when its electronics started to develop a small intermittent glitch,

so I decided to replace it. What I like most about my new ETS is the variable speed fan. The fan on my old unit had only one speed," Schricker said.

Smith's unit also worked well until this heating season began.

"We come across working ETS systems that are 20 to 30 years old all the time," Jack Snell, SIEA Energy Services Manager said. "They have a proven and simple technology that just plain works."

"We're encouraging members to exchange and upgrade because we can't get parts for these old dinosaurs anymore. And if the communications receiver goes out, there's nothing we can do. If it fails, the unit won't be able to distinguish on-peak from off-peak. That's not good for SIEA or the member."

San Isabel Electric also introduced a new lifetime repair contract program in 2023. In addition to the cost-saving benefits of replacing an older heater with a newer model, you can do so without worrying about fees related to the cost of parts, labor, diagnosis, or the trip to make the repair. And the repair contracts are very inexpensive, starting at \$250 for 2100 series units.

For more information about San Isabel Electric's electric thermal storage heaters, the exchange and upgrade, and lifetime repair contract programs, please visit [siea.com/ets](http://siea.com/ets) or call 800-279-SIEA.

# POWER EQUIPMENT AND AUTO ACCIDENT SAFETY

The power poles lining streets and highways are hit by cars tens of thousands of times each year, often bringing the live power lines to the ground.

Knowing the proper steps to take in these accidents is critical. Elementary school students are taught this information during San Isabel Electric's Story Behind the Switch program. Safe Electricity and San Isabel Electric urges everyone to share this information with their family, friends, and loved ones.

Several years ago, four Indiana teenagers collided with a power pole and found themselves in a dangerous situation. The collision caused a power line to fall on the vehicle they were traveling in. Fortunately, some of them had just attended a power line safety demonstration at their high school.

Lee Whittaker, one of the students involved in the crash, credits their survival to the timely electrical safety education.

"I made sure everyone else was okay and made sure I was okay. I told them not to get out," Whittaker said. "That was the main thing [the presenter] had repeated during the program, not get out of a vehicle if you're in an accident involving power lines."

If you must get out because of fire or other danger, jump clear of the vehicle without touching it and the ground at the same time. Then hop with feet together — don't run or stride. Electricity spreads out through the ground in ripples, like a stone dropped in water. The voltage is highest in the ring closest to the vehicle and decreases with distance. Hop with feet together or shuffle away so that one foot won't be in a higher voltage zone than another, which could make you a conductor for electricity.

"If the power line is still energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path for that electricity and electrocution is the tragic result," says Ryan Elarton, San Isabel Electric General Manager. "Even if a power line has landed on the ground, there is still the potential for the area near your car to be energized. Stay inside the vehicle unless there's fire or imminent risk of fire. It's best to wait until local electric utility crews to arrive to make sure power to the line is cut off."

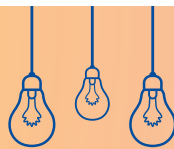
If you come upon, or witness an accident involving toppled power poles and lines, don't leave your vehicle to approach the accident scene.

"Often our inclination is to step in and help those in danger and offer assistance to the injured," Elarton said. "However, in accidents involving power poles, the best thing you can do is call for help. Wait for trained assistance to arrive, or you could become an additional victim in need of rescue."

## Did YOU KNOW?

There are 4 ways to report a power outage to SIEA:

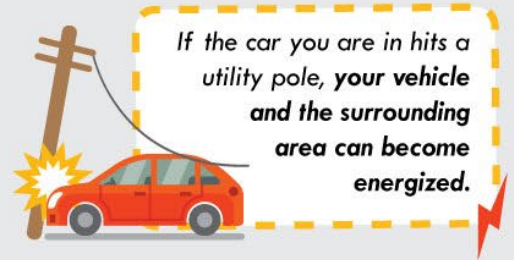
1. Text OUT to 844-989-3013
2. Use our mobile SmartHub app
3. Visit us online at [siea.com/SmartHub](http://siea.com/SmartHub)
4. Call 800-279-SIEA (7432)



## KNOW WHAT TO DO



### if in an Auto Accident with Power Lines



Even if you do not touch lines or equipment, you can still be killed or seriously injured.



**1. Do NOT leave the car,** and warn others to stay away.

**2. Call 911** to have the utility notified.



**3. Wait** until a utility professional has told you it is safe.



The **only** reason to exit the vehicle is **if it's on fire.**

If the car is on fire, jump clear of the vehicle: **with feet together, and without touching the car and the ground at the same time.**



Continue to **hop away** with your **feet together** as far as you can.



Learn more at

**Safe Electricity.org**

## WHAT'S NEW WITH 2024 REBATES

If you're planning on making energy-efficiency upgrades in 2024, you should also be planning on taking advantage of San Isabel Electric's rebate program. Together, with our power-supplier, Tri-State Generation & Transmission, we saved member-owners like you more than \$220,000 on energy-saving projects in 2023.

We offer a variety of rebates to help you invest in high-efficiency equipment for your home or business. The amounts vary but can be substantial.

Use this QR code to see a list of products eligible for rebates.



To apply for a rebate online, visit [siea.com/rebates](http://siea.com/rebates). Printable rebate applications are also available online or can be requested by phone by calling 800-279-SIEA (7432).

## SCHOLARSHIP REMINDER

Applications are due by 5 p.m. on February 15

Time is running out! Scholarship applications are due by 5 p.m., February 15. Apply at [siea.com/scholarships](http://siea.com/scholarships).

Last year, San Isabel Electric awarded a record-breaking \$39,000 in scholarships. Every eligible student who completed their application was awarded a scholarship in 2023.

Scholarships are typically a one-time, \$1,000 award. However, the top scoring applicants will be invited to interview with the SIEA Board of Directors for a chance to compete for an additional one-time \$4,000 Powered-Up Scholarship.

### Applicants must meet the following criteria to be eligible to apply:

- Scholarship applicants must have a parent or guardian who buys electricity from San Isabel Electric.
- Colorado residency
- Eligible students must either be graduating from high school in the 2023-2024 academic year or have taken at least a two-year break in their educational journey.
- Minimum GPA of 2.0.
- Students should be planning to attend an accredited college and/or university, or an occupational training program lasting two years or less at an accredited vocational school, technical school, community college, or junior college during the 2024–2025 academic year.



## DONATION IMPACT REPORT NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2023



San Isabel Electric operates under seven cooperative principles, which includes practicing a Concern for Community. Each board member lives in the community he or she serves, and we all work together to help our communities thrive.

Each month, the board of directors donates to community projects to help keep our communities strong and growing. All philanthropic giving funds come from unclaimed capital credits, not from member rates and electric bills. Our process for using unclaimed capital credits follows state law for unclaimed property. Unclaimed capital credits cannot be used for system improvements, maintenance, payroll, or other overhead costs.

For more information about capital credits and unclaimed capital credits, visit [siea.com/capitalcredits](http://siea.com/capitalcredits).

**\$1,000**

Holiday Food Baskets —  
Rye/Colorado City Lyons Club

**\$1,000**

Track Uniforms —  
Kim/Branson High School

**\$1,000**

Championship Competition  
in Texas — Pueblo West  
JROTC Drill Team

**\$1,000**

New Timekeeping System —  
Pueblo West Swim Team

**\$1,000**

Senior Technology Classes to Enhance  
Self-Sufficiency — Mt. Carmel  
Wellness and Community Center



**\$500**

High School Culinary  
Program — La Veta School

**\$500**

Annual Parade of Lights and Yule Log  
Festival — Beulah Social Club