



**If your power goes out...Take these steps to be comfortable, safe and help MEC restore service quickly.**

- Check your electrical panel:** Look for tripped breakers or blown fuses. Try to reset the breakers by switching them off then on, and replace blown fuses.
- Call MEC:** If the power does not return after checking the electrical panel, call your utility.
- Turn off major appliances and lights:** Appliances, water heater and heating system breakers should be turned off to avoid overloading the electrical system when power is restored.
- Check refrigerator/ freezer and make sure doors are closed:** Food in a refrigerator will last for 12 to 24 hours if kept cool, and a full freezer can last for 24 to 48 hours.
- NEVER go near or touch a downed power line.**
- Receive updates:** Use battery operated radio, cell phone or corded phone to receive the latest information.
- Please be patient!** We're always working to restore electric service as quickly as possible. But we have to prioritize repairs to minimize outages. If, after an outage, power is restored to your neighbors but not to you, please call us again.

Tips For safety during outages are inside on previous page.



16755 Finley Butte Rd  
PO Box 127  
La Pine, OR 97739

541-536-2126  
800-722-7219  
midstateelectric.coop

# POWER & SAFETY GUIDE

Keep your family and home safe from electrical accidents.





**At Midstate Electric Cooperative, Inc. (MEC), your safety is always our concern. We want to help you keep your family and homes safe from electrical accidents**

**caused by bad weather or unsafe conditions. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, electrical-related incidents are responsible for 41,000 fires a year and results in the loss of over 350 lives, thousands of electrical shock and burn injuries and more than \$2 billion in personal property damage.**

**These Safety Tips are intended to help and inform our members. You can help us protect you from electrical accidents by taking a few minutes to review these tips and by checking for unsafe conditions inside and outside your home. MEC encourages you to keep this guide for future reference.**

Occasionally, circumstances beyond MEC's control, such as vehicle accidents, construction mishaps, vandalism, equipment failures in or outside the home, natural events/storms/lightning, etc., can cause power surges. Other factors may affect your power quality, as well.

If you are seeing data errors, automatic resets, equipment failure or power supply problems on equipment such as microwaves, TVs, security systems, garage doors, etc, then it may be related to power quality. Here are two ways to minimize risk for potential power disturbances or solve an existing power quality problem.

1. Be sure the electrical wiring in your home or business is properly grounded and that all voltage sensitive equipment is grounded, as well. Improper grounding is a major cause of damage to voltage sensitive equipment.
2. Install power conditioning equipment, such as surge protectors or battery back-ups, to protect your equipment from power quality disturbances.

## Safety Tips During An Outage

1. If you use lanterns or candles, place them on flat, stable, non-flammable surfaces, do not leave unattended and put them out before going to sleep.
2. Do not burn charcoal briquettes indoors, even in your fireplace. And although you may be tempted to heat your home in an emergency with a gas cooking range, DO NOT DO IT! It can discharge large amounts of odorless, deadly carbon monoxide. Portable kerosene heaters and camping propane heaters may also seem like a good choice, but they are not. Because they are not vented outside, they exhaust all fumes and large amounts of moisture into the room. KEEP THEM OUTSIDE!
3. Create a "warm room" in your home. This should be the room where you concentrate your emergency heating and activities. Isolate the room from the rest of the house by keeping doors closed or hanging blankets over entryways.
4. Conserve body heat. Put on extra clothing, including a hat. Two or three lightweight layers are warmer than one heavy layer. Also avoid staying in one position too long. Exercise generates body heat.



**Generator Safety: Generators are very handy to have if the power goes out because of a storm or other event. They are a good backup system for heaters, freezers, well pumps, and lights.**

There are two popular types of generators – portable (does not require permit) and permanent (requires a permit and professional installation). Both are a ready source of electrical power for critical needs, as well as providing some comfort and relief during a power outage. To prevent injury to yourself and damage to your home, make sure they are properly installed and used according to manufacturer's specifications.

Be safe! Read and understand all operating instructions.



**CAUTION:** If you use a back-up power generator in your home or business, please don't plug it into a wall outlet without first disconnecting from MEC's electric system. If you don't take precautions, the power from your generator will flow backwards into our high-voltage system and may injure or kill our line crews, who presume they are working on a "dead" line.

# When the lights go out – don't be afraid of the dark!

Even with a modern and well-maintained system, every electric utility sometimes experience occasional service interruptions. Vehicle accidents, construction mishaps, natural events/storms, vandalism, equipment failures, etc. can cause a power outage. Despite our best efforts, severe and unusual natural events can wreak havoc and cause a power outage that can last for hours or days. Being prepared can help if MEC's infrastructure is severely damaged. Power is brought back on according to a system that enables us to restore power to the largest group of people in the least amount of time.



**Here's a checklist of what you want to make sure you have around your home to be prepared for an outage:**



**Flashlights, radio and fresh batteries.**



**Easy to prepare food** such as canned or instant soups, stews or chili, protein or breakfast bars, and packaged freeze-dried meals.



**Lanterns, candles and matches.**



**Bottled drinking water.**



**Gas camp stoves or barbecues.**



**Kindling and firewood for fireplaces and wood stoves.**



**First aid kit.**



**Blankets and Sleeping Bags.**



**A phone with a cord or a cell phone, since cordless phones won't work when the power is out.**

## CONTENTS

- Indoor Power Safety..... 2**
  - If Someone is Shocked ..... 3
  - If You Have an Electrical Fire..... 3
- Outside Power Safety ..... 4**
  - Trees and Safety ..... 5
  - Working Outside Your Home ..... 6
  - Call Before You Dig..... 7
- When The Lights Go Out ..... 8**
  - Safety Tips During an Outage..... 9
- Outage Checklist ..... 10**





# Indoor Power Safety

We rely on electricity to make our lives easier, so remember the following safety tips when inside your home.

## Appliance Safety:

1. Never mix water and electricity. Do not allow a hair dryer, radio or other electronic device to be used near the bath tub or shower. Do not touch an electric cord or appliance with wet hands or while you are standing in water or on a damp floor.
2. Never insert a metal object into a toaster or other appliance without unplugging it first.
3. If an appliance is sparking or buzzing, turn it off and get it fixed or replaced.
4. Always unplug electric devices before doing repairs.
5. Make sure portable space heaters have automatic shutoff devices should it tip over.

**If small children are in the home, apply safety inserts to prevent accidents.**



## Cords and Wire Safety:

1. Never overload a circuit. Big multiple-plug devices lead to overloading and the possibility of fire.
2. Make sure bathroom outlets have a ground fault interrupter, or GFI, device installed. The GFI will trip the electric circuit if a fault is detected.
3. Use extension cords on a temporary basis only. Replace cut, punctured or worn cords. Never run a cord under a rug or through a wet area. Do not nail or staple them to walls, floors or other objects.
4. Use three-pronged plugs. The third prong grounds the circuit and prevents shocks.
5. Don't mess with breaker panels or fuse boxes. If a circuit trips and you are not sure why, call a licensed electrician.



**2** Always keep yourself and metal objects at least 10 feet away from power lines.

**3** Although the "service" wire (from the transformer to the connection at your house) usually is insulated, never consider it safe to work around. The insulation can be worn, creating a hazard.

**4** Use only outdoor rated lights, fixtures and extension cords. Ground Fault Interrupters, or GFIs are a good investment for all outdoor circuits.

**5** Never use electric power tools or appliances when it is raining outside or if the ground is wet.

## Call before you dig.

If you plan to dig more than 12 inches underground, call the Oregon One-Call Center at 800-332-2344 at least 3 days prior to digging. This free service, funded by MEC and other utilities, locates underground utilities.



## Let us help!

If you need to prune or fall a tree growing into or near a power line, call MEC to make arrangements to drop the power line while you do so.



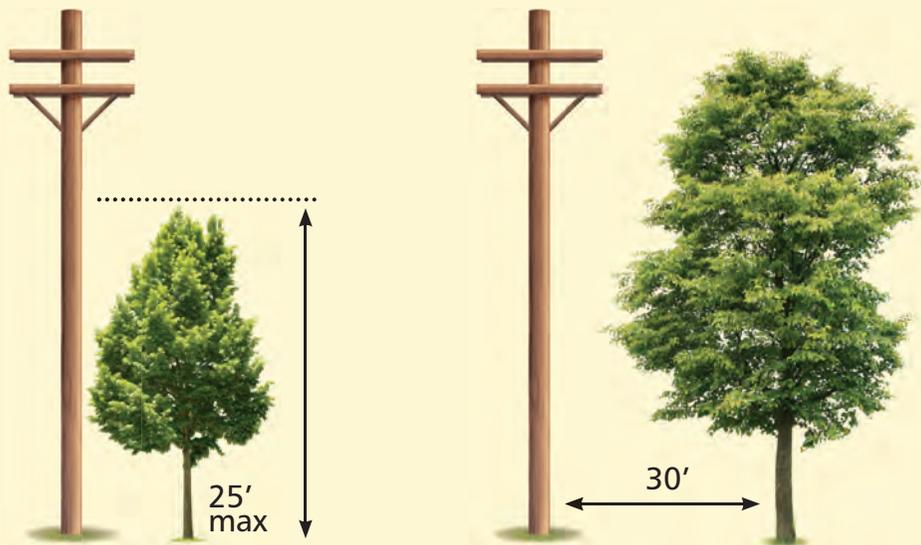
# Working Outside Your Home: Stay safe with the following tips.



- 1** One more time: Look up. You don't actually have to touch a wire to get shocked by an overhead line. Electricity can jump to a good conductor, such as a metal ladder, if it gets too close to an energized wire.

## Landscaping for Power Safety

Selecting "power-friendly" trees helps reduce unscheduled power outages and saves countless hours of pruning. When planting near power lines, choose trees that will grow no higher than 25 feet at maturity. Larger trees should be planted more than 30 feet away from power lines.



### If someone is shocked,

- 1.** Call 911 immediately. Tell them it is an electrical accident.
- 2.** If there is a chance the person may still be in contact with the power source, do NOT touch them or anything he or she is touching.
- 3.** Turn off the main power to the house.



### Workshop Safety:

- 1.** Keep your workshop and storage space clean and dry. Sparks can ignite scraps, sawdust and solvents. Do not operate power tools with wet hands or while you are standing in water or on a damp floor.
- 2.** Know your power tools. Read and follow all manufacturers' instructions. Check for wear or corrosion. Clean tools regularly and inspect grounding connections.

### If you have an electrical fire...

- 1.** NEVER use water on an electrical fire.
- 2.** If the fire can be put out safely, use a Class C fire extinguisher. If the fire cannot be put out safely, leave the house and take everyone with you.
- 3.** Call 911 and tell them it is an electrical fire.
- 4.** Turn off the main power to the house.



# Outside Power Safety



## Downed power lines are dangerous!

Utility power lines that serve your home contain tens of thousands of volts – even if they've been knocked to the ground in a windstorm. Please stay safe around them.

If there are underground lines in your area, call 800-322-2344 for a line locate at least 3 days prior to digging.

1. If you see a downed power line, call MEC at 541-536-2126 immediately.
2. Consider all wires ENERGIZED and dangerous. Even lines that are de-energized may become energized at any time.
3. Stay at least 10 feet away from the wire. Electricity can travel through the ground; therefore, a live wire touching the ground can harm you even if you don't touch the wire.
4. Electricity can also travel through tree limbs. Never remove tree limbs or other items that are touching or near a downed wire. Never use any object to move a downed wire. Rubber boots or gloves will not protect you from electric shock.
5. If a broken power line should fall on your vehicle, stay inside the vehicle until help arrives. Warn others not to touch the vehicle and have them call for help.
6. If someone makes contact with a downed power line, don't try to rescue them because you risk becoming a victim yourself. Call 911.

The leading cause of accidental contact with power lines in Oregon is **tree related.**

Follow these common sense safety tips.

- 1 Look up! If you see a wire in the area where you want to work, call MEC at 541-536-2126.
- 2 Don't prune a limb that is near or touching a wire. Tree limbs contain water and can conduct electricity.
- 3 If possible, let a professional do your tree trimming.
- 4 Remember that metal ladders and other tree-trimming equipment are excellent conductors of electricity. Stay clear of wires.
- 5 Don't build a tree house in trees with power lines in them or near them.