

Electricity Theft: Not Worth the Risk

Every year, electric cooperatives across the country cope with thieves—folks who deliberately tamper with their electric meter to steal power. Not only is this practice extremely dangerous, it is a serious crime that can result in hefty fines and jail time.

“We’ve seen people do some dangerous things—using jumper cables and any number of other objects to get around paying for the power they use,” explains CVEA COO, Travis Million. “However, not only are these persons stealing from the Co-op, they are stealing from their fellow co-op members and risking their own lives and those of our linemen.”

According to the Cooperative Research Network, a division of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, power surging through a compromised meter can cause an electrical catastrophe. A short circuit could produce an arc flash bright enough to cause blindness and powerful enough to launch fragments of shrapnel-like, red-hot debris. Serious injury or death from electrocution, explosion, or fire often results from meter tampering. Only trained CVEA personnel wearing protective clothing should work on meters.

“Any time you get into a meter base, you run a risk,” comments Million. “With an arc flash, someone could be killed or seriously injured.”

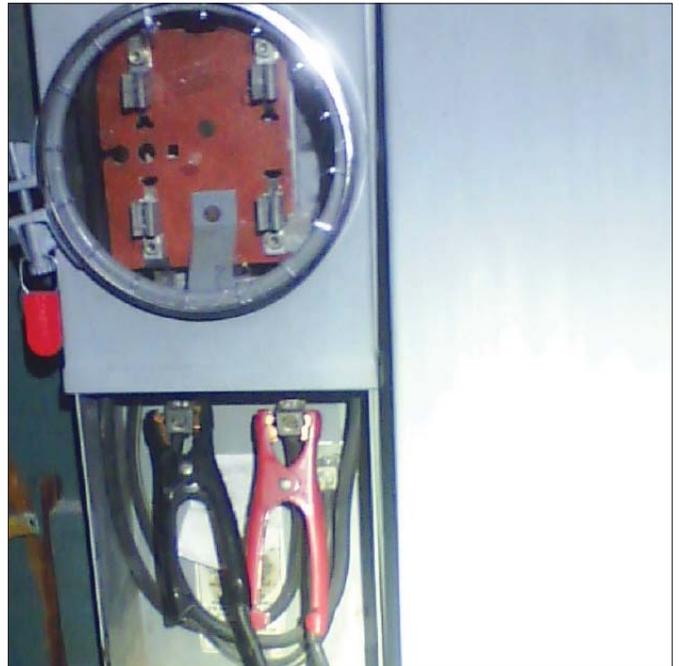
Electricity theft is not a victimless crime either. Your not-for-profit cooperative loses revenue and expends resources to investigate tampering. These costs are then passed on to the entire membership.

National estimates vary, but *The Washington Post* cited revenue protection officials who claim between \$1 billion and \$10 billion worth of electricity is stolen from utilities nationwide annually. “We don’t know exactly how much is being stolen annually in Copper Valley Electric’s service territory, but it does happen, how far and widespread is unknown,” according to Million.

It is important CVEA members know the rules that govern this issue for the Cooperative. Below is Section 6.13 of CVEA’s Tariff.

6.13 Tampering with Association Property

Tampering with meters and other facilities of the Association violates these consumer service policies and Rules and Regulations. The tampering may also result in civil liability under Alaska law (AS 42.20.030).



The Association may collect from the party up to three times its damages sustained and three times the value of the service taken as a result of such tampering. Further, the party may be convicted of several criminal offenses, with penalties ranging up to 10 years imprisonment and a fine of \$100,000, depending upon the magnitude of the offense (AS 11.46.480, 12.55.125[d], and 12.55.035[c] [1]).

In addition to statutory penalties, a fee as set forth in the applicable Schedule of Fees will be charged for consumers’ facilities where a seal has been broken or removed, or the Association’s facilities are otherwise tampered with.

In flagrant cases, electric utility service will be discontinued (Section 10.9). Authorization to break a meter seal will be given in appropriate cases upon application and payment of a fee as set forth in the applicable Schedule of Fees.

Damage or vandalism includes, but is not limited to, broken glass, broken seals, and altered mechanisms.

In order to protect its equipment and service, the Association may seal the service switch and/or other devices or enclosures on the consumer’s premises to prevent access by any unauthorized persons.

The consumer shall not in any way interfere with or alter the meters, seals, or other property used in connection with rendering electric service, or permit same to be done by other than the authorized agents or employees of the Association. Damage to or loss of Association property shall be paid for by the consumer.

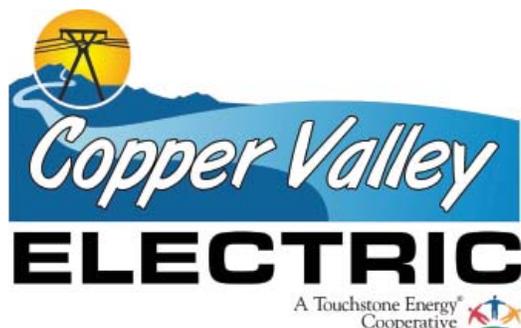
Damage to or removal of the Association's meters, seals, or other property shall be considered sufficient reason for discontinuance of service to a consumer until the Association has received satisfactory assurance that its equipment will be free from future interference and until all damages, fines, and bills for metered or unmetered electricity have been paid.

Remember, meter tampering can result in electric shock or severe injury to the homeowner or CVEA personnel, it is illegal, and it increases electricity rates for other co-op members. "Stealing power is just as serious a crime as any other type of theft," Million says. "As a co-op, we take a hard line on it because this is not a theft from a big corporation; it is a loss to all 3,000 members."

Since everyone pays for lost power, please let CVEA know if you suspect meter tampering. Call the Cooperative at (907) 822-3211 or (907) 835-4301 to report possible theft of service. All information can be given anonymously.

If you have questions about this or any other CVEA issue, please contact Sharon Crisp, Director of Communications at (907) 822-5506, (907) 835-7005, or email crisp@cvea.org. ■

Source: *The Washington Post*, Cooperative Research Network, Christine Smith/National Rural Electric Cooperative Association



DO NOT TAMPER WITH YOUR ELECTRIC METER

Meter tampering can result in electric shock, is illegal and increases electricity rates for other co-op members.



- ⊘ Never break a meter seal.
- ⊘ Never open a meter base.
- ⊘ Never remove a meter or alter an entrance cable in any manner.

If you know or suspect that someone has tampered with their meter, please contact us immediately.



BY SPENDING A FEW MINUTES, I'M SAVING A LOT.

Yeah, a few minutes. That's all the time it takes me to change my home's air filter each month and save money. What can you do? Find out how the little changes add up at TogetherWeSave.com.



Top Five Energy Users in Your Home A Starting Point For Savings

By Anne Prince

While most homeowners would like to be more energy efficient and save money, often it feels overwhelming because many people don't know where to start. How can the average family use less energy, lower their utility bill and still meet their daily energy needs?

To help jumpstart your effort, it is useful to know what the top energy users are in your home. With this knowledge, you can choose a path that works best for your family.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Agency, the top five energy users in U.S. homes are:

- Space cooling
- Space heating
- Water heating
- Lighting
- Refrigeration

Adjust the temperature

Together, home heating and cooling use the most energy and take the biggest bite out of your energy budget. On the bright side, there are ways you can achieve at least 10 percent savings by taking a few simple low-cost or no-cost steps

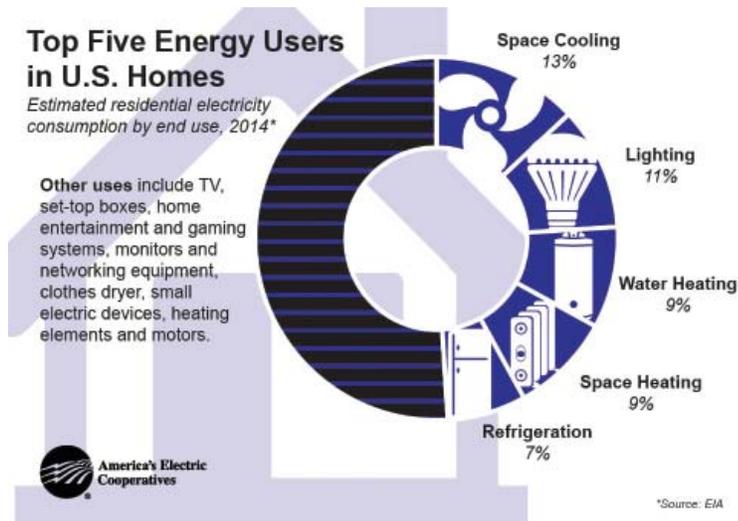
- During cold weather, set your thermostat to 68 degrees Fahrenheit
- During warm weather, the recommended indoor temperature is 78 degrees Fahrenheit
- Cleaning the filters of your system can cut costs from 5 to 15 percent
- Clean the coils around your electric baseboard heater to maintain maximum efficiency
- Caulk and weather-strip around windows and doors to prevent heat from escaping to the outdoors

No matter what the climate or time of year, proper use of a programmable thermostat can save you 10 percent on your monthly utility bill.

Top Five Energy Users in U.S. Homes

Estimated residential electricity consumption by end use, 2014*

Other uses include TV, set-top boxes, home entertainment and gaming systems, monitors and networking equipment, clothes dryer, small electric devices, heating elements and motors.



Shine the light on savings

Take a fresh look at the lighting in your home. If you still use incandescent lighting, your light bulbs are operating at only 25 percent energy efficiency. Replacing your home's five most frequently used bulbs with Energy Star-certified LEDs can save you money. Another easy way to save is to always turn lights off in rooms that are not being used.

Water heating efficiency

Just as it is energy-wise to insulate your roof, wall or floor, it also pays to wrap your hot water heater with an insulating blanket. This is all the more critical if you have an older unit. Make sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions.

For additional efficiency and savings, insulate exposed hot water lines and drain one to two gallons of water from the bottom of your tank annually to prevent sediment build-up.

Put cold hard cash back in your wallet

If your refrigerator was purchased before 2001, chances are it uses 40 percent more energy than a new Energy Star model. If

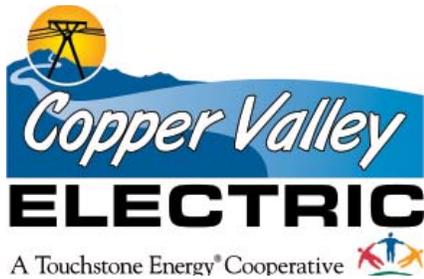
you are considering an appliance update, a new Energy Star refrigerator uses at least 15 percent less energy than non-qualified models and 20 percent less energy than required by current federal standards.

Regardless of the age of your fridge, there are additional steps you can take to save energy and money. For example, don't keep your refrigerator too cold. The Department of Energy recommends temperatures of 35 – 38 degrees Fahrenheit for the fresh food compartment and 0 degrees Fahrenheit for separate freezers (used for long-term storage).

By understanding how your home uses energy, you can determine the best ways to modify energy use and keep more money in your wallet.

For additional ways to save, check out the energy information link at cvea.org or visit togetherwesave.com. ■

Anne Prince writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.



Working Hard For You CVEA Service Awards



Nancy Heidelberg
Executive Assistant
25 Years of Service

In 2018, Nancy celebrates 25 years with CVEA. She is originally from Decatur, Mississippi, but settled in Glennallen in September of 1993. Nancy and her husband Gary have one daughter, Kendra, and their son and family are Clint and Katy, Joshua and Ella.

Before moving to Alaska, Nancy was an assistant in the human resources department at a telecommunications company and for an insurance agent. Her first job in Glennallen, before CVEA, was as a substitute teacher at the Glennallen Elementary School.

In Nancy's spare time she enjoys reading and has fun gardening in the spring, summer, and fall. She loves to get dirty and watch things grow; she calls it "dirt therapy".

When Nancy was asked what has changed in her position in the last five years, she said the change that has impacted her most directly was the CEO retirement and the Board's selection of

the new CEO. Other things include making the leap from paper to electronic board packets and the transition from paper to electronic records retention. She also was enlightened working the paper trail of the Allison Creek Hydro Project.

What one thing Nancy wishes other people know about CVEA is that there is more to providing the service CVEA provides than people imagine. The work behind the scenes to make sure the lights come on and stay on is no simple feat. She wants people to know that when you flip the switch and your light does not come on, rest assured many hands are already in motion at CVEA.

Nancy's favorite thing about CVEA is her co-workers; she jokingly says "they're not half bad." According to Nancy, "respectfulness and appreciation for each other is evident throughout the organization. The obligation to learn and engage in new ideas in a sometimes challenging industry requires me to try and stay on top of my game."

CVEA's CEO, John Duhamel, says this about Nancy, "Nancy is the unsung hero of CVEA. She works behind the scenes on every facet of CVEA and her contributions are wide-reaching and critical, yet not visible to most members. She raises the bar of professionalism for all the Senior Staff and Board of Directors. Her historical knowledge of CVEA is relied upon daily and is vital to not repeating past mistakes. I owe her immeasurable gratitude for her positive attitude, devotion to the Cooperative, and her professional opinions. CVEA would not be where we are today without her contributions over the last 25 years."



Ryan Compehos
Valdez Plant Operator
10 Years of Service

Ryan Compehos, Power Plant Operator in Valdez, is celebrating his tenth year at CVEA. Prior to CVEA, he worked as an electrician at the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. Ryan was born and raised in Valdez, where he now lives with his four children Kalen, Rylee, Lola, and Brynn.

In his spare time Ryan enjoys hanging out with his family and friends, snowboarding, fishing, hiking, and playing tennis.

When asked what has changed in his last five years at the Cooperative, he says, "we have an almost entirely new crew of operators in the Valdez District. I went from being the youngest operator, to the oldest, aside from Terry DeLay who's been with the company for 25 years, within a few short years. In addition, our power plants have been upgraded from 1970's mechanical controls to modern computer PLC controls."

When asked about his favorite thing about working for CVEA, he added, "It's

the most fun job I've ever had. I love all the employees that work for CVEA, and I actually like coming to work every other week."

When CVEA Production Manager Wayne McKinzey was asked to comment, he said, "As one of our more senior Power Plant Operators, Ryan has helped train many of the other operators. He is frequently called on for his experience. He is a hard worker, is easy going, and I really enjoy his dry sense of humor."



Kyle Anderson
Valdez Plant Operator
5 Years of Service

Having lived in Valdez for all of his 29 years, Kyle is another local. Prior to CVEA, he was a laborer. He came to CVEA as an Operator Trainee five years ago. After training, he became a Plant Operator in the Valdez District.

Kyle lives in Valdez with his wife, Ashley, son Olin, and pets Paxson, Jubilee, and Trigger.

He enjoys playing music in his spare time, and likes hunting, fishing, and pretty much anything outdoors, including chasing pigs in Hawaii.

Kyle's favorite thing about CVEA is the great crew he works with and knowing if he does his job well, it has positive effects on the entire community.

When asked if he'd like to provide a quote, Kyle offered, "Do or do not; there is no try."

According to McKinzey, "Kyle is highly productive and strives to make things better at the plants. His diverse skill set

is a huge benefit to the Cooperative and the members. Kyle believes in the work he does at CVEA, and takes great pride in his accomplishments. I look forward to seeing Kyle advance and grow in his position."



Joshua Geldersma
Copper Basin Plant Operator
5 Years of Service

Josh was born and raised in Glennallen. He worked at HAARP prior to his career as a Plant Operator at CVEA, a position he's had for five years.

Josh lives in Glennallen with his wife Alyson, and their daughter Addalynn.

In his spare time, he enjoys fishing, rafting, hunting, and spending time with his family.

When asked his favorite thing about working for CVEA, Josh said, "the people; there are a bunch of good people working at CVEA."

Wayne McKinzey, Josh's supervisor, had this to say, "Josh has developed into a remarkable Power Plant Operator that I feel lucky to have working for us. He is willing to take anything on, and does so with a positive attitude. He is easy to get along with and has an exceptional work ethic."



Cindy Unger
Valdez Janitor & Groundskeeper
5 Years of Service

Originally from Ridgway, Pennsylvania, Cindy started with CVEA five years ago, shortly after she moved to Valdez in 2013. She joined the team as the janitor and added groundskeeper to her title in 2014.

Prior to CVEA she was a fish culturist and then a part-time human resource assistant with Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation. Cindy lives with her husband Rob and their two daughters, Joslyn and Laken. Their two dogs, Bear and Daisy, cat named Callie, and three fish round out the family.

In her spare time, Cindy enjoys cooking, reading, fishing, beachcombing, and spending time with family and friends.

According to Cindy, her favorite thing about working for CVEA is that she never has the same day twice. "I get to do a variety of tasks from cleaning to planting flowers, shoveling snow to decorating for our Halloween Spooktacular event. The co-workers I have at CVEA are pretty amazing people, and I am happy to call them my friends."

McKinzey had this to say about Cindy, "Cindy is a key member of the Valdez team. She always has a smile, and her attention to detail and ability to multi-task are amazing. Her official title is Janitor/Groundskeeper, but everyone knows Cindy does so much more. She tackles other duties whenever she is needed, helps keep everyone organized, and is a major contributor to all of the Co-op's big internal and external events."



Board of Directors

Lon Rake, President
Mary Odden, Vice President
Dan Stowe, Secretary
Brad Honerlaw, Treasurer
Paul Kildal, Director
Jeff Saxe, Director
Will Stark, Director
Fred Williams, Director

P.O. Box 45
Glennallen, AK 99588
www.cvea.org

Copper Basin District

(907) 822-3211
(907) 822-5586 (fax)
Mile 187 Glenn Hwy.

Valdez District

(907) 835-4301
(907) 835-4328 (fax)
367 Fairbanks Dr.

After hours outage line

(866) 835-2832

Important Dates

March

CVEA Board Meeting: The March meeting of the Board of Directors is 1 p.m. Thursday, March 15, 2018, in Valdez

CVEA Offices Closed: The CVEA offices will be closed, Monday, March 26, 2018, for Seward's Day

April

CVEA Board Meeting: The April meeting of the Board of Directors is 1 p.m. Tuesday, April 19, 2018, in Glennallen

Deadline: Director election ballots must be received in the correct CVEA mailbox by 5 p.m., Tuesday, April 24, 2018

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2018 Annual Meeting of Members Valdez - Tuesday, May 1, 2018 Copper Basin - Thursday, May 3, 2018

Copper Valley Electric Association, Inc., invites you to the 2018 Annual Meeting of Members. The CVEA Annual Meeting is your chance, as a member-owner, to find out what is going on at your electric cooperative.

This year's meeting will be Tuesday, May 1, in the Valdez District at the Valdez Civic Center, and Thursday, May 3, in the Copper Basin District at the Alaska Bible College Murdock Campus Center. Registration and food service begin at 5:30 p.m. and the business meeting begins at 6 p.m.

The purpose of the meeting will be to hear reports, learn about CVEA projects and issues, ask questions about your cooperative, accept director election results, and to transact any other business that may come before the Membership.

In addition to learning valuable information, every member signed in by 6 p.m. will be eligible to win a ton of cool prizes, and will receive a \$10 credit on their power bill! Don't be late!

In April all cooperative members will receive the official notice of the annual meeting in the mail, along with the 2017 Annual Report, and the 2018 Director Election materials. Director candidate profiles, a ballot, and a stamped return envelope will be included.

Co-op members in the Copper Basin District will select one candidate, and members in Valdez will select two candidates.

As a member of your cooperative, the single-most important action you can take is to vote for your Board representatives.

Per CVEA Bylaws, a minimum of 10 percent of the district membership must return their ballots to constitute a valid election. For this reason, even if there is only one candidate, we still need you to VOTE!

Ballots must be received in the designated CVEA post office box by 5 p.m. Tuesday, April 24, 2018. When voting, please remember the back of the ballot envelope must be signed by the member whose signature is on file. If you are unsure what is on your signature card, or need an update, please stop by either office or give us a call at 822-3211 or 835-4301 prior to March 27, 2018.

This year, all valid ballots received by the deadline will be entered into a drawing for a \$50 CVEA energy credit!

So, please, when you receive your ballot, make your voice heard and exercise your right to vote!

