



May is National Electrical Safety Month

This month, we encourage all members to take extra time to plug into safety.



#ElectricalSafetyMonth

In May, electric cooperatives across the country promote safety awareness to coincide with National Electrical Safety Month.

Every year, thousands of accidents occur due to shock hazards, and CVEA, a not-for-profit electric utility, is committed to educating the public about potential electrical dangers in the home.

In 2016, 475,500 structure fires (including residential fires) were reported in the U.S., causing 2,950 deaths, 12,775 injuries and \$7.9 billion in property damage. According

to the National Fire Protection Association, a residential fire was reported every 90 seconds. Many home fires occur when electrical equipment is outdated, overloaded, or improperly used.

“It is critical that the public understands their home’s electrical system and the safety concerns associated with the latest residential technologies before bringing them into their homes,” explains Travis Million, CVEA CEO. “With newer technologies and more electrical gadgets being used in the home than ever before,

people need to ensure they have an electrical system that’s compatible with the increased load.”

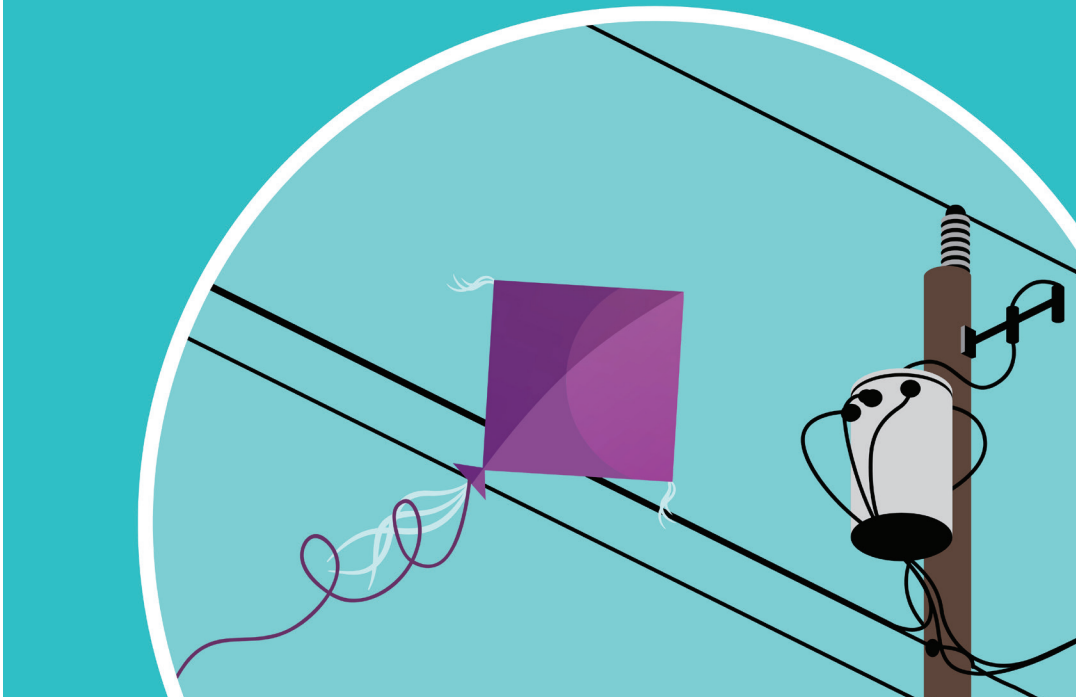
Here are a few safety reminders:

- Only use lightbulbs that meet (or are below) maximum wattage listed on the fixture; exceeding can cause overheating
- Extensions cords should be temporary; not used as a permanent solution
- Never use electrical cords that are warm to the touch, frayed, or damaged in any way

- Watch for frequently tripped circuit breaker and blown fuses; these are warning signs of aging or faulty wiring
- Smoke alarms should be installed in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of the home; remember to test once a month

Through electrical safety awareness and education, we can all play a part in preventing electrical hazards and injuries in the future. Together, let’s plug into safety this May.

Talk to your children about the importance of practicing electrical safety.



Warm, sunny days beckon the child in all of us to head outside and play. CVEA recommends that families review and stress to children to follow simple electrical safety rules for safe outdoor play. Children often do not understand the dangers of electricity. Make them aware of overhead power lines and electrical equipment, and emphasize they should never climb or play near them.

CVEA recommends children be taught to follow these outdoor safety rules:

- Never climb trees near power lines even if the power lines are not touching the tree, they could touch when more weight is added to the branch
- Fly kites and drones in large open areas like a park or a field, safely away from trees and overhead power lines; if a kite or drone gets stuck in a tree that's near power lines, don't climb up to get it, contact CVEA for assistance
- Never climb a utility pole or tower
- Don't play on or around pad-mounted electrical equipment
- Never go into an electric substation for any reason - electric substations contain high-voltage equipment which can be deadly; never rescue a pet or retrieve a ball or toy that goes inside - call CVEA instead
- Never go anywhere near a fallen power line; tell children to report any fallen or dangling wires to an adult
- Use caution when plugging in radios, Iphone speakers, or any electrical gadget outdoors, and keep all electrical appliances at least 10 feet away from hot tubs, pools, ponds, puddles, and wet surfaces
- Parents, when designing an outdoor play area, do not install playground equipment or swimming pools underneath or near power lines. ■

CVEA is Staying Safe One Day at a Time

By Anne Prince

This month, take a moment to reflect on the importance of safety. May is Electrical Safety Month. Throughout the month Copper Valley Electric will share safety tips and reminders on the co-op's Facebook page to help raise awareness of the dangers of electricity. We all depend on electricity to power our lives, but accidents can happen when electricity is improperly used.

Responsibility to CVEA employees

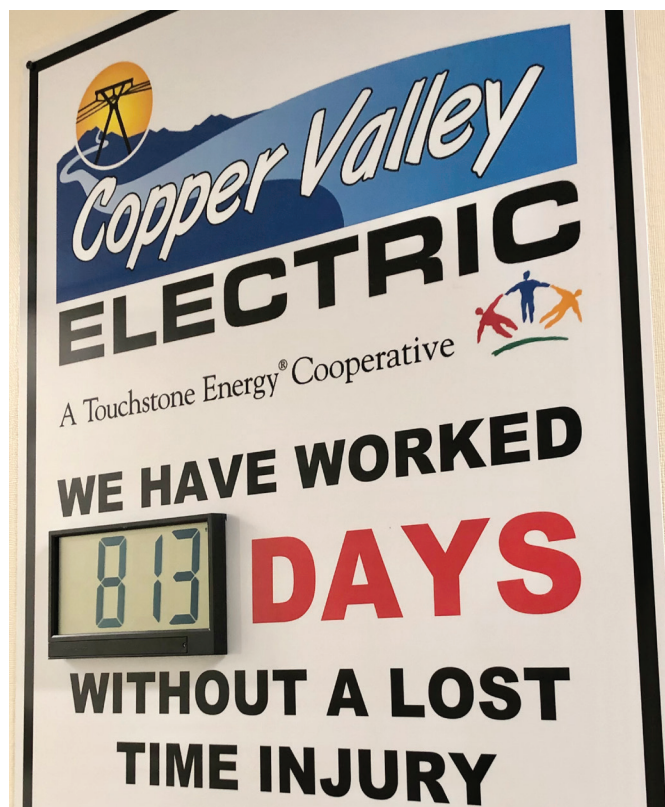
It is no accident that safety is a top priority at CVEA. The co-op is committed to a culture of safety that is integral to daily operations. Lineworkers and power plant operators are required to wear personal protective equipment at all times when on the job.

This includes special fire-resistant clothing that will self-extinguish, limiting potential injuries from burns and sparks. Insulated and rubber gloves are worn in tandem to protect from electrical shock.

The CVEA safety team regularly discusses important safety issues pertaining to work in the field as well as within the building. Employees meet annually to discuss the safety program and receive reminders on staying safe at work and at home.

Responsibility to CVEA members

CVEA's concern for safety extends beyond just employees. The entire team cares deeply about the safety of coopera-



tive members. According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, thousands of people in the U.S. are critically injured and electrocuted as a result of electrical fires, accidents and electrocution in their own homes.

To promote safety education in local communities, CVEA frequently provides electrical safety content in Ruralite, the monthly member magazine, on Facebook, and cvea.org. Co-op representatives also provide live 'Power Town' safety demonstrations at the annual meeting, community events, and in the classrooms at schools within the service territory.

In addition, CVEA encourages the public to contact the co-op if they see a downed power line or any other type of dangerous electrical situation.

CVEA strives to provide our communities with safe, reliable and affordable electricity and to serve as your trusted energy provider, now and well into the future.

CVEA believes in its responsibility to raise awareness about the importance of electrical safety and encourages everyone to take a moment to plug in to safety this May. In addition to looking for tips on CVEA's Facebook page and website throughout National Electrical Safety Month, visit esfi.org for information on electrical safety in and around your home and workplace. ■

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.

Know what's below. Call 811 or your local utilities to locate underground lines.

ADOBE STOCK PHOTO BY MILAN

Don't Forget Safety When Digging

Be aware of what's above and below your project area when working outdoors

By Michael Rovito

As the snow begins to melt and the ground thaws, many Alaskans turn their attention from snow shoveling to summer projects. Since warmer weather in Alaska only lasts for a few months before the freeze comes back, there can be a sense of urgency to accomplish all the tasks on your summer to-do list.

But there's a good reason to take a step back and handle an important aspect of pre-project planning. Buried beneath the ground around many homes in the state are electric, gas, telephone, cable and sewer lines, all of which can cause various levels of frustration—and a high amount of danger—if they are damaged.

Many electric utilities in the state bury portions—if not all—of their electric

distribution lines. Once the ground is put back and the dig marks vanish, it can be impossible to tell where an electric power line is buried. If a homeowner were to dig into the ground and strike a live power line, it could lead to significant injury or death from electrocution.

For many areas of the state, there is a simple way to protect yourself against accidentally striking an underground line, and it's only a phone call away. The Alaska 811 Digline is a centralized, pre-excavation service that provides messaging between excavators and underground facility owners.

Founded in 1988, 811 helps the public, contractors, utilities and other excavators notify the owners of underground facilities before digging. The service also coordinates each utility's technician, who will come to your home with a special device to locate underground lines. Using colored spray paint, technicians mark the ground with colors corresponding to different types of underground facilities so everyone is aware of the areas to avoid.

This service is free for the first locates on

a project. It is important to pay attention to the timeframes provided by 811.

For more information on the service, visit www.811ak.com. The website provides a listing of communities where 811 is active.

Not every community in Alaska has access to 811's services. In those cases, it is crucial to contact your local utilities before digging so they can let you know where underground lines are. Don't forget to leave plenty of time between your request for locates and starting the project.

Striking a buried power line is extremely dangerous, and the risks cannot be overstated. Even if you are confident you know where the power line is, that's not enough for the safety of you and those around you.

Building that new fence or expanding your deck is a good feeling of summer accomplishment, but it's not worth taking unnecessary risks. There can be a lot of infrastructure right under our feet. Taking a moment to find out where everything is can mean the difference between life and death. ■

Move Over for Roadside Crews

Not only is it the polite thing to do, it is the law

By Paul Wesslund

Hood River Electric Cooperative lineworkers warn motorists of their presence near the roadway.
PHOTO BY LIBBY CALNON

Every year, workers along the sides of roads are injured or killed when cars crash into the crews' site, even though they are marked with bright cones and warning signs.

An easy way for drivers to reduce incidents that harm police officers and other first responders, road construction workers and utility crews is to remember a slogan—actually, a law—“Slow down or move over.”

It is good advice and a decent thing to do. It is also a requirement in all 50 states.

Legislatures first passed Move Over laws 25 years ago to

reduce the year-after-year harm to roadside emergency workers. In the past five years, states have added electric and other utility projects to their Move Over or Slow Down laws.

Electric utilities were part of the effort to expand the law to protect the safety of line crews.

There are slight differences in each state's Move Over laws, but not so much you can't figure out the right thing to do, even when traveling from state to state. Here are the basic requirements:

- Within 200 feet before and after a work zone marked

with bright signs and marker cones, and often flashing lights, change lanes if there is more than one lane on your side of the road so there is an empty lane between your vehicle and the roadside crew.

- If it is not possible or safe to change lanes, slow down. Many states specify slowing down 20 mph below the posted speed limit if it is 25 mph or more—so 5 mph if the posted speed limit is 25 mph.

- Drivers must obey all traffic directions posted as part of the worksite.

- Keep control of your car.



This basic driving rule is listed in many Move Over laws. The requirement to slow down offers general guidance rather than specifying a speed. It means you must pay attention and respond to weather conditions. Heavy rain or a slick road might mean you need to slow down more than 20 mph.

Penalties for violating the Move Over requirements range from \$100 to \$2,000, or loss of your driver's license.

Electric utility crews warrant special attention. A roadside construction project might close a lane for days or weeks, giving people familiar with the area time to anticipate the changed traffic pattern.

A study of utility worksite accidents found the temporary nature of power line repairs could surprise motorists.

Because utility work can start and finish in a few hours, it raises risks with drivers who think they know the road ahead. Another risk is when worksites are being put up or taken down. Roadside accidents can happen as crews are setting up signs and traffic cones.

Don't drive distracted. Drive according to the conditions of the road. Be courteous to roadside work crews. Watch the signs and obey them. Follow the laws.

It is good advice that could save a life. ■

ALASKA

Drivers approaching stationary emergency vehicles that are displaying flashing lights—including tow trucks—traveling in the same direction, must vacate the lane closest if safe and possible to do so, or slow to a speed reasonable and prudent for traffic, road and weather conditions. This applies to road maintenance and animal control vehicles.

ARIZONA

Drivers must reduce speed and, if safe to do so, vacate the lane closest to any stationary vehicles with flashing or warning lights, including emergency vehicles and tow trucks.

CALIFORNIA

Drivers must slow down and vacate the lane closest to a stationary emergency response vehicle flashing emergency lights, if safe to do so. This applies to tow trucks and Caltrans vehicles, if displaying flashing amber warning lights, and waste service vehicles.

IDAHO

Drivers traveling in the same direction must slow below the posted speed limit and vacate the lane closest to a stationary emergency vehicle displaying flashing lights, if safe to do so. This applies to tow trucks, wreckers, other recovery vehicles and municipal vehicles.

MONTANA

Drivers approaching a stationary emergency vehicle displaying flashing lights, including towing and recovery vehicles, traveling in the same direction, must vacate the lane closest, if safe and possible to do so, or slow to a safe speed. If on a highway with a speed limit 50 mph or greater, the driver must slow by at least 20 mph below the posted speed limit.

NEVADA

Drivers traveling in the same direction must reduce speed below the posted speed limit and, if safe and possible to do so, vacate the lane closest to stationary emergency vehicles and tow vehicles displaying flashing lights.

NEW MEXICO

Drivers approaching a stationary emergency vehicle or a recovery or repair vehicle, including tow trucks, must slow down and vacate the lane next to the stopped vehicle, if they are able. If drivers are not able to move over, they are required to slow down and be prepared to stop.

OREGON

Drivers approaching any stationary vehicle displaying warning or flashing lights, including roadside assistance and tow vehicles, traveling in the same direction, must vacate the lane closest if safe and possible to do so, or to reduce speed to at least 5 mph under the posted speed limit.

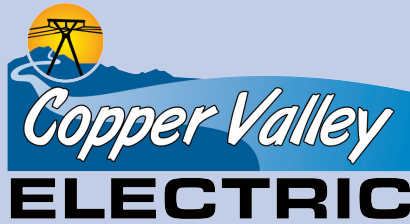
UTAH

Drivers approaching a stationary authorized emergency vehicle, tow truck or highway maintenance vehicle displaying flashing lights, and traveling in the same direction, must reduce speed and, if safe to do so, vacate the lane closest to stationary vehicles.

WASHINGTON

Drivers must vacate the lane closest to stationary emergency vehicles, including tow trucks, if traveling in the same direction and it is safe to do so. If not, drivers must reduce speed to at least 10 mph below the posted speed limit. This applies to stationary or slow-moving municipal, utility and road maintenance vehicles.

For other states, visit <https://drivinglaws.aaa.com/tag/move-over-law>.



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Important Dates

May

CVEA Board Meeting: The May meeting of the Board of Directors is 1 p.m. Thursday, May 20, 2021, in Valdez

June

CVEA Board Meeting: The June meeting of the Board of Directors is 1 p.m. Thursday, June 17, 2021, in Glennallen

CVEA Community Foundation

Contribution Season: The 2021 Contribution Season begins Monday, June 28, 2021. Visit cvea.org for details.

July

CVEA Offices Closed: The CVEA offices will be closed Monday, July 5, 2021, for Independence Day

CVEA Board Meeting: The July meeting of the Board of Directors is 1 p.m. Thursday, July 15, 2021, in Valdez

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Annual Meeting Wrap Up

If you missed this year's Annual Meeting, you can watch the complete video on the Copper Valley Electric YouTube channel; find the link on Facebook or the home page at cvea.org. Additionally, a complete meeting recap will be included in the June Annual Meeting Issue of Ruralite Magazine.

Annual Meeting Door Prize Winners

If you won a door prize at the Virtual Annual Meeting, items will need to be picked up at your local office during regular business hours; Monday through Thursday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Not sure if you're a winner? Find the complete list on Facebook or visit cvea.org.