



- Our employees will never show up at your door to demand payment.
- Never give personal information to an unknown caller or visitor. Our representatives have access to the details they need to service your account.
- Demands for immediate payment by wire transfer, cryptocurrency, gift cards or cash reload cards should immediately raise red flags.
- If you think you've been contacted by a scammer falsely representing the co-op, please let us know as soon as possible.

Don't Give Power to Utility Scams

By Abby Berry

Every day, millions of Americans are targeted by scammers through phone calls, emails, text messages, online or in person. Scammers' tactics can change daily, which is why it's important for consumers to stay on top of the latest scam reports from local and national news outlets, as well as your local utility companies.

Just this week, several CVEA members were targeted through a phone scam where the scammers demanded immediate payment and threatened to shut off power if the money was not

received. Please remember, CVEA will never call you and demand immediate payment over the phone without notice.

We want you to be aware of two additional scam tactics that are trending. One is the overpayment trick, where a scammer contacts you and claims that you have overpaid your utility bill. The scammer will say they need your personal banking information to deposit the credit back to your checking account. Don't fall for this scam! If you make an overpayment on your energy bill,

Electrical Safety Tips for Hunters



This hunting season, we encourage all members to be aware of electrical equipment and take necessary precautions while hunting. Keep these tips in mind as you enjoy the great Alaskan outdoors.

Photo courtesy Eric Scheidt



Take notice of posted warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.



Do not shoot at or near power lines, insulators, marker balls, or other electrical equipment.



Know where power lines and equipment are located on the land and in the area you hunt.



Be especially careful in heavily wooded areas where power lines and guy wires may not be as visible.



Do not place stands on utility poles or climb poles to increase your line of sight. Energized lines and equipment can conduct electricity to anyone who comes in contact with them, causing electric shock or electrocution. **Do not** place decoys on utility equipment. It can cause an obstruction and serious hazard to line crews.

ADOBE STOCK PHOTO
BY NINAMALYNA

Winter Is Just Around the Corner

By Michael Rovito

Alaska winters sneak up from behind those short-lived leaf colors to wallop most of the state with cold and snow before a good portion of the Lower-48 starts to see fall.

Alaskans are a hardy bunch. The impending darkness and winter weather don't usually faze folks in the 49th state, but it can impact their wallets. That is why taking advantage of some simple ideas to conserve power during winter can really help the pocketbook.

Following are some U.S. Department of Energy no-cost and low-cost tips to save energy during the dark days of winter:

Cover drafty windows. A time-honored tradition in many older homes, covering drafty windows has the obvious effect of keeping cold air from infiltrating your home. Common methods include using a heavy-duty, clear plastic sheet on a frame or taping clear plastic film to the inside of your window frames. Make sure the plastic is tight to the frame to prevent cold air from getting in.

Adjust the inside temperature. Those heating with wood stoves can skip this. There's nothing quite like walking into a warm home when it's 20 below zero

outside. But keeping your house toasty all day and night really adds up. Whether you are using a programmable thermostat or must adjust the temperature manually, find out how low you can comfortably go temperature-wise and set it there for when you are home. When you are sleeping or out of the house, the DOE recommends lowering the temperature 10 to 15 degrees. That may be impractical in many parts of Alaska, so make a good judgement on how low you can set the thermostat and not risk freezing pipes.

Reduce heat loss from the fireplace. The comfort of snuggling up in front of a crackling fire as a blizzard rages outside is one of the cozy pleasures of winter, but that fireplace could be sucking the heat out of your home. There are some tricks to reduce heat loss from your fireplace, with varying degrees of complexity:

- Keep your fireplace damper closed unless you have a fire burning. According to the DOE, an open damper is like an open window during the winter.
- If you can, install tempered glass doors on your fireplace and a heat-air exchange system that blows warm air into the room.
- Make sure all seals and caulking are

airtight, especially on the chimney.

Lower your holiday lighting costs. Holiday decorations can be found on homes throughout Alaska. Many electric cooperatives—even in remote areas of the state—conduct Christmas light contests, and lights are a sign of the season. But be aware of what kind of lights you are hanging on the outside of your house.

The most energy-efficient lights are LEDs, or light-emitting diodes. Pairing LEDs with a timer can help save on energy costs by shutting them off at a pre-determined time so they don't glow all night.

These are just a few of the many steps Alaskans can take to prepare for winter and save on energy costs in the darkest, coldest days of the season.

Everyone's home is different, and each homeowner should consider their own needs and circumstances before deciding on energy-saving activities.

Your electric cooperative is a great place to go for advice on energy efficiency and other questions about electric power.

Winter is just around the corner, but being prepared can take some of the stress away and allow Alaskans to enjoy the longest season. ■



OVERHEAD VERSUS UNDERGROUND

By Pam Blair

After a wildfire, hurricane or other natural disaster causes a widespread power outage, consumers tend to ask, “Why don’t they put power lines underground?”

One significant reason is burying power lines could more than double consumers’ electric bills.

While costs vary by region, type of service and terrain, installation of underground lines is estimated to be 10 times the expense of overhead lines: \$750 a foot compared to \$70 a foot.

California’s Pacific Gas and Electric Co. says it costs approximately \$3 million per mile to convert overhead electric distribution lines to underground, compared with the \$800,000 per mile to build overhead lines.

Power outages are estimated to cost the U.S. economy \$150 billion a year. But Peter Larsen from the University of California’s Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory says research generally shows undergrounding costs far exceed benefits.

In a study of Texas utilities, he found the cost of burying lines would exceed benefits by \$21 billion—30 cents of benefits for every dollar spent.

Overhead and underground power lines both have advantages and disadvantages beyond cost.

“I think undergrounding in most cases is a last solution, not a first solution, unless for aesthetic purposes,” says James L. Sweeney, professor of management science and engineering at Stanford University. “I don’t think there is a one-size-fits-all cookie-cutter solution.” ■



The Pros and Cons of Power Line Placement

OVERHEAD

Pros:

- Less expensive to build and maintain.
- Easier to locate and repair faults or damage.
- Can be built in any terrain.
- Quicker construction time.

Cons:

- Exposed to wind, wildfire and weather, including ice.
- Susceptible to damage from trees and vegetation.
- Vulnerable to blinks when animals and branches contact lines.
- Risk of damage from vehicles colliding with power poles.
- Possibility of contact with energized downed lines.
- Less attractive.

UNDERGROUND

Pros:

- Protected from wind, wildfire, weather, tree branches and damage from most animals.
- Less susceptible to outages from vehicles colliding with poles.
- Reduced risk of electrocution from downed lines.
- Aesthetically more pleasing, with poles and wires out of sight.

Cons:

- More expensive to build and maintain.
- Time consuming and expensive to locate and repair a malfunction.
- Vulnerable to damage and electrocution from digging or other construction.
- Susceptible to damage from earthquakes and flooding of the transformer box.
- Not practical in unstable sandy or rocky mountainous areas.
- Ultimately fed by overhead lines.



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Important Dates

September

CVEA Offices Closed: The CVEA offices will be closed Monday, September 6, 2021, for Labor Day

CVEA Board Meeting: The September meeting of the Board of Directors is cancelled

October

Ruralite Cover Photo Contest: Submit photos October 1 - October 28, 2021

CVEA Board Meeting: The October meeting of the Board of Directors is 1 p.m. Thursday, October 21, 2021, in Glennallen

National Co-op Month: Stay tuned for Co-op Month announcements

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2021 Ruralite Cover Photo Contest

Would you like to see your photo on the cover of Ruralite Magazine, CVEA's primary member communication tool? Over 2500 copies of Ruralite are distributed each month to members in the Copper Basin and Valdez. That means excellent exposure for local photographers!

Details

- Winners will be chosen by CVEA employees
- Final decision will be announced by Monday, November 22, 2021
- Winning photos will be featured on the cover of Ruralite for one issue in 2022 and on cvea.org
- Winners will receive \$100 per winning photo and will be announced to the local media
- CVEA will retain rights to utilize all photos submitted in various communication tools including print and web
- Future photo usage in Ruralite or on cvea.org will include photo credit

Contest Rules

- Photographers must reside in a dwelling that receives service from CVEA
- Photos must be from within CVEA's service area (Valdez to Sourdough, out to Kenny Lake, and over to Sheep Mountain)
- Content can include scenery, community events, and community residents enjoying local activities; photos from all seasons should be considered, **at least two winter photos will be chosen**
- Only vertical photos will be eligible to win cover contest; horizontal photos may be submitted for use in other print or web based applications
- Maximum six photos submitted per contestant
- Each photo submission must include a digital and printed copy at 8X10 inches; digital files must have a resolution of 300 dpi at 8X10 inches
- Each photo submission must include photographer's name, location of photo, and photo title
- Photos must be submitted between October 1-28, 2021
- Photos can be dropped off at the CVEA offices in each district or sent directly to Sharon Scheidt: sscheidt@cvea.org or P.O. Box 927, Valdez, AK 99686
- Photographer submissions must include permission form; visit cvea.org or email sscheidt@cvea.org for blank form
- If you have questions, please contact Sharon Scheidt at 907-255-1425, or email sscheidt@cvea.org

Submission Dates: October 1 - October 28, 2021