

**PLUG  
INTO  
SAFETY**



**ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH**

Make electrical safety a priority  
this month, and every month.

# CVEA Prioritizes Safety Year Round

**By Anne Prince**

At Copper Valley Electric, Electrical Safety Month is recognized each May, but we also know the importance of practicing safety year-round. From Co-op crews to you, the members we serve, we recognize that everyone has a part to play in prioritizing safety.

According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, thousands of people in the U.S. are critically injured or electrocuted as a result of electrical fires and accidents in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable. Electricity is

a necessity, and it powers our daily lives. But at CVEA, we know first-hand how dangerous electricity can be because we work with it 365 days a year.

Travis Million says, “safety is more than a catchphrase. As CEO, it’s my responsibility to keep Co-op employees safe. Additionally, we want to help keep you and all members of our community safe.” That’s why you’ll see CVEA hosting safety demonstrations at community events and in schools throughout the year to demonstrate the dangers of electricity. The team at

CVEA discusses emergency scenarios, such as what to do in a car accident involving a utility pole and downed power lines. Students are cautioned about the dangers of pad-mounted transformers and overloading circuits with too many electronic devices.

CVEA encourages parents to talk with their kids about playing it safe and smart around electricity. Caution them to be aware of overhead power lines near where they play outdoors.

Electricity is an integral part of modern life, especially given the prevalence of electrical devices, tools and appliances used in homes, at work, and in schools.

A top priority of the Co-op is providing an uninterrupted energy supply 24/7, 365 days per year. But equally important is keeping our community safe around electricity. Here are just a few practical electrical safety tips.

#### **Frayed wires pose a serious safety hazard.**

Power cords can become damaged or frayed from age, heavy use or excessive current flow through the wiring. If cords become frayed or cut, replace them, as they could cause a shock when handled.

#### **Avoid overloading circuits.**

Circuits can only cope with a limited amount of electricity. Overload happens when you draw more electricity than a circuit can safely handle--by having too many devices running on one circuit.

#### **Label circuit breakers to understand the circuits in your home.**

Contact a qualified electrician if your home is more than 40 years old and you need to install multiple large appliances that consume large amounts of electricity.

#### **Use extension cords properly.**

Never plug an extension cord into another extension cord. If you "daisy chain" them together, it could lead to overheating, creating a potential fire hazard. Don't exceed the wattage of the cord. Doing so also creates a risk of overloading the cord and creating a fire hazard. Extension cords should not be used as permanent solutions. If you need additional outlets, contact a licensed electrician to help.

Visit [cvea.org](http://cvea.org) for additional electrical safety tips. If you are interested in a safety demonstration for your school, organization, or upcoming community event, email [info@cvea.org](mailto:info@cvea.org). ■

*Anne Prince writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56% of the nation's landscape.*





# COPPER VALLEY ELECTRIC



**Smart Management. Smart Life. SmartHub.**

## What can you do with SmartHub?

You may have heard about SmartHub, the innovative tool for account management, but what can it do for you? SmartHub can help you take control of your account like never before.

- Make a payment
- View your current and past bills
- View your energy usage
- Analyze your current and past usage
- Utilize tools to help conserve energy
- Go PAPERLESS!
- Sign up for auto pay

## Two SmartHub drawings in May. You could be a **WINNER!**

1. Register for SmartHub by May 31 and be entered into drawing for a \$100 CVEA energy credit (one winner per district)
2. Show off your SmartHub:
  - Visit the SmartHub booth at the annual meeting in your district
  - Show the CVEA staff member that you have SmartHub on your mobile device
  - You'll be entered into the live drawing for a \$100 CVEA energy credit (winners will be announced at the annual meeting - must be present to win)

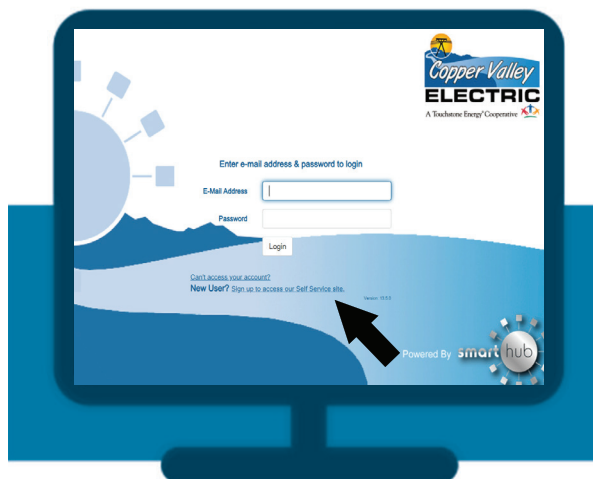
Want to be on the go and in control? CVEA members can load the SmartHub app to their mobile device. Just visit the App Store or Google Play and search for SmartHub.



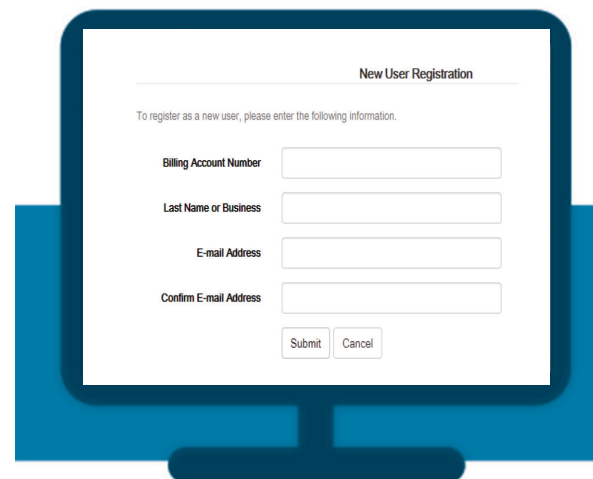
## 3 Easy Steps to Sign Up for SmartHub



### 1. Visit [cvea.org](http://cvea.org) and click the SmartHub icon



### 2. Choose 'sign up to access our self service site'



### 3. Fill out new user registration information

# CVEA Begins Rate Study

There are several components of a rate study, but the primary goal is to establish rates that recover the cost of providing power to CVEA members. The industry recommends completing a rate study every three to five years. The last rate study conducted by the Co-op took place in 2018 and was based on 2017 financial information.

In 2021, the CVEA Board of Directors approved a strategic plan. The number one goal determined by the cooperative is to build financial strength. In support of this goal a ten-year financial forecast, partnered with an equity management plan, was approved. According to Chief Financial Officer, Jaime Matthews, “financial strength is critical for a business to be successful. CVEA has put extensive effort into planning future maintenance and upgrade projects. As part of those planning efforts, projecting future costs and revenues is very important. By following a financial forecast, we can ensure sufficient cash flow to pay bills, repay bank loans, and return capital to our members, which is a core Cooperative principle.”

An objective of the plan is to refresh the rate study in an effort to keep rates equitable amongst all rate classes. The CVEA Board, working with the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC), are establishing goals for the rate study planned for 2022.

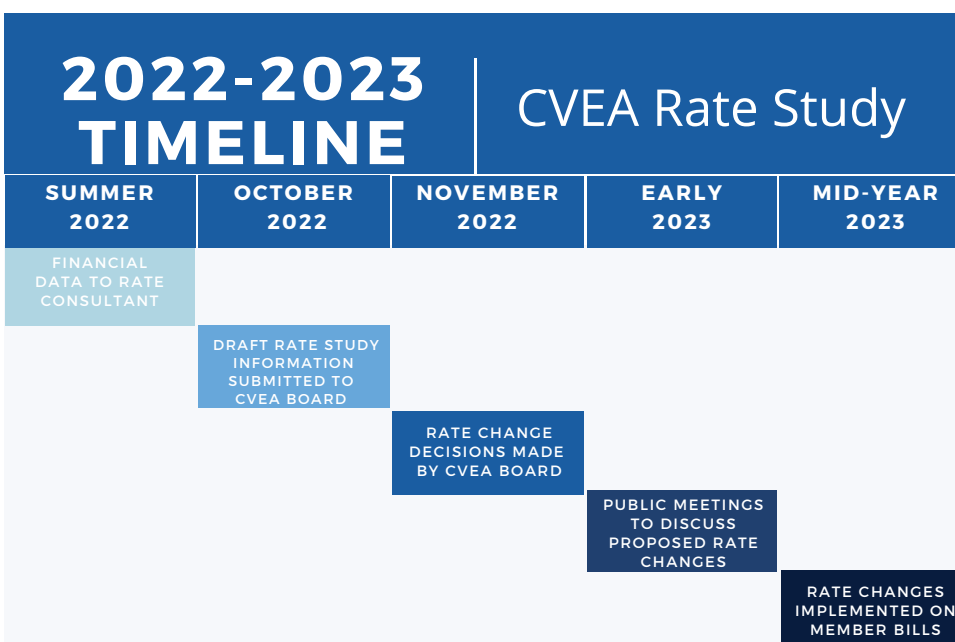
## CVEA Tariff

In 1998 CVEA members chose local regulation by the Board of Directors over regulation by the state public utilities commission.

After becoming locally regulated CVEA adopted the commission approved Tariff to guide its operations and amended the Tariff to include Section 1.4 that addresses changes to existing rates or fees. A complete copy of the Tariff is located at [cvea.org](http://cvea.org).

## How are changes to the CVEA Tariff proposed and approved?

1. Management shall support recommended changes with factual historical operating and accounting data.
2. Proposed changes shall be supported by historical operating revenues and expenses, together with any known and measurable adjustments to revenues and expenses anticipated for the period during which the rates will be in effect.
3. Notice to the members will be given at least sixty (60) days prior to the proposed effective date of any changes in rates or fees.
4. The proposed change and an explanation of the reason for that change shall be published on the Association's website, in the Association's Ruralite Magazine or included with the Association's billing statement, and/or noticed in a newspaper with general circulation in the service area.
5. One or more public hearings will be held in each affected district prior to the proposed effective date of any change. The initial public hearing will be held at least thirty (30) days prior to the proposed effective date of the change.
6. The purpose of the public hearing is to hear member comments and questions pertaining to the proposed change.



## Member Education

CVEA will provide several opportunities for input. Public meetings will be planned in each district to hear member comments and questions.

The first public meeting will provide members an overview of the rate study process. A second will give the members an opportunity to comment on proposed changes.

CVEA will make an extra effort to keep members informed throughout the process. If you have questions, please contact Jaime Matthews at 907-822-3211 or email [jmatthews@cvea.org](mailto:jmatthews@cvea.org). ■

# Wildfire Season is Here: Be Prepared With a Burn Permit

By Tim Mowry

Despite what it might look like out your window – there was more than three feet of snow on the ground in Fairbanks when this was written – wildland fire season in Alaska has arrived and Alaskans should prepare accordingly.

Alaska's statutory wildland fire season starts on April 1 and ends on August 31, barring an emergency declaration to extend it. The start of Alaska's fire season was pushed up to April 1 from May 1 starting in 2006 after back-to-back record fire years in 2004-05 to help better prepare firefighters for earlier, bigger fire seasons.

As a way to minimize the number of human-caused wildfires in Alaska, the Alaska Division of Forestry requires anyone burning brush or using a burn barrel on state, municipal or private lands to obtain a small-scale burn permit between April 1 and August 31. Burn permits are free and available at your local state forestry office or online at [forestry.alaska.gov/burn](http://forestry.alaska.gov/burn). They may also be available at your local fire department.

Here are some commonly asked questions regarding burn permits and burning in Alaska.

## Why do I need a burn permit?

Burn permits help to reduce human-caused wildfires by ensuring people burn safely and legally on state, private and municipal lands, according to regulations set forth by the Division of Forestry and Department of Environmental Conservation. Burn permits help to educate the public by providing information about burning safely and responsibly.

## Where do I get a burn permit?

You can get a free burn permit at Division of Forestry offices in Delta Junction, Fairbanks, Glennallen, McGrath, Palmer, Soldotna and Tok. In some areas, they are also available at local fire departments and businesses. Burn permits are also available online at [www.forestry.alaska.gov/burn](http://www.forestry.alaska.gov/burn). Burn permits are good for one year and must be renewed annually.



## What can I burn?

Only untreated wood and other organic material such as brush, grass clippings, leaves, cardboard and paper can be burned. Burning materials that emit black smoke, obnoxious odors or toxic fumes is prohibited. Examples include plastic, rubber, vinyl, animal waste/carcasses, household garbage, waste oil, etc. Burning those items can result in a citation and fine.

## How much can I burn?

The Division of Forestry issues both small-scale and large-scale burn permits. A small-scale permit allows burning of one pile no more than 10 feet in diameter and 4 feet high and/or the use of one burn barrel. Anything larger requires a large-scale permit and a site inspection by a Division of Forestry fire prevention officer.

## Do I need a burn permit for a campfire?

No. Burn permits are not needed for warming, cooking or signaling fires that are less than three feet in diameter with flames lengths no higher than two feet.

## What happens if I get caught burning without a permit or burning illegally?

While the Division of Forestry prefers to gain compliance through education, burning illegally is punishable by a fine and possible jail time, depending on the severity of the violation and whether or not it causes a wildfire. Common violations include burning without a permit, burning during a suspension or closure, burning materials that emit black smoke, obnoxious odors or toxic fumes, leaving a fire unattended, and failing to clear the ground around a



campfire, brush pile or burn barrel.

### **What's a burn suspension vs. a burn closure?**

During times of high fire danger, high fire activity or a shortage of firefighting resources, the Division of Forestry can suspend or close burning. A burn suspension means that all permitted burning (i.e. brush, burn barrels) is prohibited until the suspension is lifted. Burn suspensions are evaluated daily by Division of Forestry prevention personnel in Area offices around the state. A burn closure is more extreme than a burn suspension and means all types of burning are prohibited until the closure is lifted.

### **What does the 2022 wildfire season look like?**

It's impossible to tell what this summer's fire season may bring. While many areas of the state received well-above-normal snowfall this past winter, that doesn't necessarily translate to a slow fire season. It's more a matter of how quickly the snow melts, how quickly the fuels dry out, how hot and dry the weather is in May and June and how much lightning we get that dictate what fire season will be like. We do know that there has been a trend toward, earlier and longer fire seasons in recent years and that 4 of the top 10 fire seasons on record in terms of acres burned have occurred in the last 18 years. The last above-average fire season Alaska experienced was in 2019 when nearly 2.6 million acres burned.

### **With all the snow that fell in the Interior, shouldn't it be a quiet fire season?**

As we noted above, fire season is not necessarily influenced by how much snow we get in the winter as much as it is by how hot and dry it gets during the summer, as well as how much lightning we get. While the above-average snowfall in the Interior last winter may delay the start of the fire season in that part of the state, the snow will melt at some point. Then it's a matter of how quickly the fuels dry, to what extent, and for how long. All it takes is about one week of hot, dry weather to cure Alaska's fuels and make them primed for ignition.

For comparison, consider that following the snowiest winter on record in Fairbanks during the winter of 1990-91 when more than 147 inches of snow fell, more than 1.6 million acres burned in the summer of 1991.

### **What can I do to get ready for wildfire season?**

There are lots of things homeowners can do to prepare for the fire season and make their homes more resistant to wildfires. First, just clean up around your home by removing dead brush, leaves and grass. Clean any dead leaves and spruce needles out of your gutters. Cover any vents or soffits with wire mesh to prevent windblown embers from entering your home.

Homeowners should prepare and practice a family evacuation plan and prepare a "go kit" with essential items to take in the event of an evacuation. Check out the Alaska Firewise Brochure at [forestry.alaska.gov](http://forestry.alaska.gov) for tips on how to firewise your home and

property.

Most importantly, always adhere to safe burning practices to help prevent human-caused wildfires, whether you are burning brush in your yard, using a burn barrel to burn paper products or roasting marshmallows over a campfire. Almost all human-caused fires are avoidable; protect yourselves and your neighbors by always burning responsibly.

### **Safe Burning Practices**

- Visit [forestry.alaska.gov/burn](http://forestry.alaska.gov/burn) or call your local office to make sure burning is allowed on the day you burn
- Clear the area around your fire down to mineral soil to keep it from spreading
- Never leave a fire of any kind unattended for any period of time
- Don't burn on windy days
- Make sure any fire is completely out before leaving it by drowning it repeatedly with water and stirring until it is cold to the touch
- Keep campfires small and manageable
- Always have water and tools nearby
- Do not burn debris piles or burn barrels within 30 feet of structures or under utility lines
- Burn only paper, untreated/unpainted wood, and organic debris



**OPPOSITE PAGE: A roadside burn permit sign. BELOW: A local enjoying a safe camp fire.**

PHOTOS COURTESY ALASKA DIVISION OF FORESTRY

**Tim Mowry** is Public Information Officer, Alaska Division of Forestry Wildland Fire & Aviation Program



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**Copper Basin District**  
907-822-3211

Mile 187 Glenn Hwy.

**Valdez District**

907-835-4301

367 Fairbanks Dr.

**After hours outage line**

866-835-2832

### Important Dates

#### May

**CVEA Annual Meeting:** The 2022 Annual Meeting is Tuesday, May 3, in the Valdez District, and Thursday, May 5, in the Copper Basin District. Registration begins at 5:30 p.m.

**CVEA Board Meeting:** The May meeting of the Board of Directors is 1 p.m. Thursday, May 19, 2022, in Valdez

#### June

**CVEA Board Meeting:** The June meeting of the Board of Directors is 1 p.m. Thursday, June 16, 2022, in Glennallen

**CVEA Community Foundation Contribution Season:** The 2022 Contribution Season begins Monday, June 27, 2022. Visit [cvea.org](http://cvea.org) for details.

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## Keep Utility and Emergency Crews Safe While Working

When the power goes out, so do CVEA's line crews. Lineworkers are the first to respond after an outage occurs, and they work tirelessly to restore power to the communities in CVEA's service territory.

Additionally, when the lights are on, crews work daily throughout the community making repairs and performing maintenance work on the system.

If you're traveling and see crews on the side of the road, CVEA kindly asks that you move over if possible and give them a little extra space to work. Safety of everyone involved is top priority, and this extra precaution ensures just that.

If you approach a crew while traveling

on a two-lane road, moving over to the next lane might not be an option. In this case, please slow down when approaching roadside crews.

Utility crews aren't the only ones who could use the extra space. Emergency responders, such as police officers, firefighters and emergency medical technicians, often find themselves responding to emergency situations near busy roadways. Please follow the same procedures mentioned above to help keep these crews safe.

There's plenty of room for all. Let's work together to keep everyone safe on our local roadways. ■

