

Empowering You To Stay Safe



MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT/CEO RYAN BARTLETT

AT TAYLOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, WE TAKE seriously our duty to provide reliable electricity to our members in the safest, most affordable manner possible. Though we work hard to fulfill that promise year-round, perhaps there is no better time to reiterate our commitment than during National Electrical Safety Month.

Over these next few weeks, as our lineworkers and behind-the-scenes staff go about their vital work as steadfastly as ever, we ask you, our members, to consider your role as our partners

one-fiftieth the amount used by a 60-watt lightbulb. You should not swim near a dock or marina unless you know its wiring is in good repair. You should also never swim near a boat while it's running.

If you see an electric shock drowning taking place, never enter the water. You could become a victim, too. Turn the power off if possible, call 911 and throw a life preserver to the victim or reach out with a fiberglass hook to help the victim get out of the water.

We recommend hiring a licensed electrician to inspect home pools, spas and hot tubs and make any repairs or upgrades necessary to keep the wiring up to date and safe.

Here are a few additional tips for enjoying a day at the pool without risking your well-being or anyone else's:

- ▶ Outdoor electrical outlets (including pools and spas) should be covered and kept dry when not in use.
- ▶ Use a ground-fault circuit interrupter for electrical devices used outdoors. Portable GFCIs are available for \$12–\$30 and don't require tools for installation.
- ▶ Make sure all electrical equipment used for swimming pools, including cleaning equipment, is grounded and working properly. If you notice pool lights flickering, stay out of the water until a licensed electrician has resolved the issue.
- ▶ Electrical devices and cords should be kept at least 10 feet away from pools and spas. Whenever possible, use battery-powered devices outdoors instead.

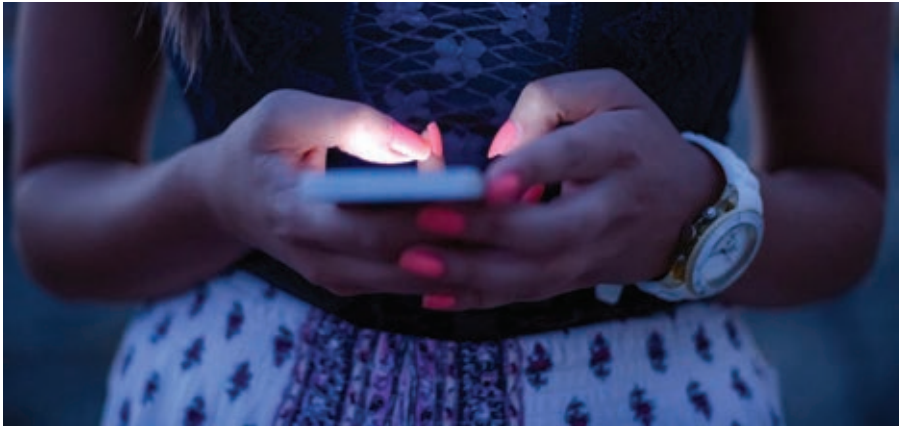
- ▶ Never handle electrical devices while you are wet, either from swimming or perspiration.
- ▶ Make sure there are no power lines over a swimming pool, and never swim during a thunderstorm. Thunder means lightning is close enough to put you at risk of electrocution.

Our intent in relaying this information is not to frighten but to illustrate how we all must keep a watchful eye toward safety whenever and wherever electricity is present, and remain especially vigilant in settings where its presence may not be obvious.



in ensuring your comfort and safety. Amid the drumbeat of daily routines, balancing work and family, we all can sometimes grow complacent about seemingly innocuous habits or practices that could bear tragic consequences.

One critically important example of this during swimming and boating season involves the risk of electric shock drowning. Docks and marinas carry electricity sources, which faulty wiring or damaged cords can release into water invisibly. As few as 10 milliamps can cause paralysis and drowning. That is



Stay Connected by Updating Your Contact Information

IN THE UTILITY BUSINESS, WE KNOW ROUGH WEATHER WILL OCCUR, AND SOMETIMES power outages simply can't be avoided. But did you know there are steps you can take to ensure your electricity is restored as quickly and safely as possible? By keeping your contact information up to date, you can help get the power on faster and take full advantage of the services Taylor Electric Cooperative offers.

Not having the correct phone number linked to your home address makes it much more difficult for you to report an outage and for us to find you when you do.

Remember when you had to speak to a customer service representative to report a power outage? Waiting on hold can be frustrating and time-consuming. Today, with the press of a button, you can easily report an outage. If you call us to report an outage, our automated system instantly recognizes your phone number and can determine the particular service address for which you are reporting an outage. Once you give our system a response, your outage is reported. But remember—this only works if your current phone number is linked to your service address.

Visit taylorelectric.com, call (325) 793-8500 or return the form below to make sure you're up to date.

TAYLOR EC INFORMATION UPDATE

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

Memorial Day
Monday, May 28

Taylor EC will be closed in observance of the holiday.



Happy Mother's Day
Sunday, May 13

"All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother."
—Abraham Lincoln

What You Can Learn From a Home Energy Audit

IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT UPCOMING

summer electric bills or still sting from last winter's, a home energy audit may be just what you need. Spending a few hundred dollars now to make efficiency improvements can save you thousands of dollars over time.

A home energy audit is a detailed assessment of your home that can give you a road map for future energy-related investments. An energy audit can provide guidance for a variety of issues:

- ▶ What efficiency investments will be most effective in reducing your energy bills?
- ▶ Are areas of your home sometimes too hot or too cold? An energy audit can identify problem areas and determine solutions.
- ▶ Are you considering a new furnace, air conditioner or rooftop solar system? An energy audit will help you “right-size” these systems and identify complementary measures that will help these large investments work most efficiently.

Online audit tools can give you a basic understanding of how your home compares to similar ones. However, an on-site audit by a qualified, experienced home energy auditor using high-tech tools will provide a much more thorough report of your home's challenges and opportunities. A professional energy audit can range from a quick, visual walk-through of the home to a comprehensive and more informative—but possibly more expensive—assessment.

Energy audits require an examination of the building envelope (attic, floor and exterior walls) and the energy systems in the home, such as the water heater, air conditioner and furnace. Follow the auditor during the inspection and ask questions so you can understand where problems are, what you can address yourself and where you may need to enlist a professional. The auditor may analyze your recent energy bills to determine what your energy is used for and if use has recently changed.

Finally, the auditor will ask about energy-use behaviors of those who live in the home. For example, is someone home all day, or does everyone leave for work and school? Residents' habits can make a big impact on energy bills and can be challenging to change.

An auditor may do some or all of the following tests:

Blower door test: This test measures how airtight your home is and identifies where the air leaks are.



A blower door test can help identify sources of air leakage.

TONU MAURING

Duct blaster: Ducts move the warm and cool air around your home; duct testing can measure whether your ducts leak.

Thermographic imaging: Identifying where more insulation is needed is a key component of energy audits. Too little insulation will make a homeowner use more energy than needed, while adding more can provide a quick return on investment. Thermographic imaging can tell you where more insulation is needed.

Following the assessment of your home, the auditor will analyze the information and make recommendations on which systems upgrades or behavior changes you can make to reduce energy use and improve comfort. If you take action based on the recommendations, you could lower your energy bill by 5–30 percent, and perhaps even more!

Check with Taylor Electric Cooperative for available resources and be sure whomever you hire is willing to answer questions. Plan to be home during the audit—it's a great opportunity to learn what makes your home tick and how you can make it function even better.



GREGORY_DUBUIS | ISTOCK.COM

Practical Pointers for Electrical Safety Month

MAY IS NATIONAL ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH, AND TAYLOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE IS working to raise awareness about potential home electrical hazards and the importance of electrical safety.

Our modern lives depend on electricity, and if you don't properly maintain your electrical products, they can create hazards. The good news is that eliminating electrical hazards from your home doesn't have to be difficult or expensive.

Many homes and their electrical systems were built before most modern-day home electronics and appliances were even invented. Today's increased demand for energy can overburden an older home's electrical system. If you notice flickering or dimming lights, it may indicate your home's wiring is inadequate for your needs. Have it checked by an electrician.

Taylor EC offers the following tips to help identify and eliminate electrical hazards to protect yourself, your family and your home:

- ▶ Make sure televisions, game systems and computer equipment have plenty of space around them for ventilation.
- ▶ Use extension cords as temporary solutions only.
- ▶ Do not place extension cords in high-traffic areas or under carpets.
- ▶ Use a surge protector to help protect your computer, TV and other electronic equipment from damage caused by voltage changes.
- ▶ Heavy reliance on power strips is an indication that you have too few outlets for your needs. Have additional outlets installed by a licensed electrician.
- ▶ Keep liquids away from electrical items such as televisions and computers.
- ▶ Make sure a lightbulb's wattage is right for the fixture. Lightbulbs with wattages that are too high for the fixture can overheat and cause a fire.
- ▶ Create a guide for your breaker box so that you know which breaker to turn off when needed.
- ▶ Recurring tripped circuit breakers or multiple blown fuses can signify a serious and dangerous electrical problem. Contact a licensed electrician immediately. As always, Taylor EC encourages you and your family to stay safe.



Taylor Electric Cooperative

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HANDY WAYS TO PAY YOUR BILL

Online

taylorelectric.com

Taylor Electric App

Available on your Apple or Android product

By Phone

(325) 793-8500

Visa, MasterCard, checks accepted
Payments credited immediately

In Person

Main office hours:

7:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m., Monday–Friday
226 CR 287, off I-20, west of Abilene
Wells Lane exit 274 between Tye and
Merkel

Abilene office hours:

7:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Monday–Friday
7966 Hwy 83, Abilene 79602
Visa, MasterCard, checks, cash and money
orders accepted
Payments credited immediately

Drop Box

Main office drop box at front gate: 24/7
Abilene office drop box (next to middle door): 24/7

Checks and money orders accepted
Payments credited next business day

Pay Stations

- **Lawrence Brothers IGA**
521 S. Access Road, Clyde
- **Food Plaza #4**
109 S.E. Fifth St., Cross Plains
- **Save-A-Lot**
155 Sayles Blvd., Abilene
- **Lawrence Brothers IGA**
2160 Pine St., Abilene
- **Check Express**
906 E. Broadway Ave., Sweetwater

Cash, checks, money orders and debit
cards accepted
Payments credited next business day



New Tech Requires New Mindfulness

WHEN YOU THINK OF ELECTRICAL

safety, what types of hazards come to mind? For many, the answer is likely to include an overloaded rat's nest of extension cords like Clark Griswold uses to light up his home in the classic holiday comedy *Christmas Vacation*.

Others might think of the farmer who has a little "run-in" with a utility pole or live wire while operating heavy machinery.

Or perhaps you think of the careless do-it-yourselfer forgetting to look overhead when using a ladder to clean out the gutters.

Those are all good answers, and Taylor Electric Cooperative has had plenty of experience dealing with them.

It can be tempting to look at these examples and think that's where the safety conversation begins and ends, but there are safety considerations for every device powered by electricity. As technological advances make electricity increasingly prominent in our daily lives, our awareness of electrical safety also must grow.

Smartphones and Other Gadgets

When most people think of counterfeiting, they probably think of money or perhaps knockoff designer handbags. But it's also big business for smartphones and accessories as well as other electronics. These knockoffs aren't just illegal and of inferior quality. They're often dangerous, having never been tested for safety. How can you tell if your product is authentic?

- ▶ Use established vendors who purchase their goods from legitimate manufacturers.
- ▶ Read the packaging and labels carefully. Text should be free of grammatical errors and not contain conflicting information.
- ▶ Packaging should specify the name and contact information of the manufacturer.
- ▶ Avoid unknown brands and products that do not display any brand affiliation.
- ▶ Learn how to recognize certification marks from Underwriters Laboratories and other safety testing labs. Carefully inspect the products you buy for authentication marks. In addition to counterfeits, consumers should be wary of deeply discounted off-brand chargers and other accessories. If the price seems too good to be true, it probably is.



PATWIT | ISTOCK.COM

Electric Vehicles

Electric vehicles must be recharged, and those charging systems have certain electrical requirements. If you're considering making the switch to an electric vehicle, you should start by ensuring your home's electrical system is up to the task. Once your charging station is installed and your shiny new car is parked in the driveway, follow these safety tips:

- ▶ Carefully read the owner's manual for your charging station upon installation and follow directions.
- ▶ Never use an extension cord to charge a vehicle.
- ▶ Inspect for damaged cords and plugs, which could result in shock and fire hazards.

Solar Panels

There are many factors that will determine if installing solar for your home or business makes sense. If, after carefully assessing your options, you determine that solar installation is the right choice for you, follow these safety tips:

- ▶ Always hire a professional to install and repair solar panels. Specific licenses, qualifications and permits must be obtained to install solar equipment.
- ▶ Solar power systems present unique safety challenges for firefighters. In the event of a fire, inform all officials of the use of solar panels and identify the type used.

With these tips in mind, you can enjoy new technologies without compromising electrical safety.

SEVERE WEATHER

Are You Ready?

Lightning strikes kill more Americans than tornadoes or hurricanes. Don't take chances with this deadly force of nature.

Go inside a building and stay away from windows and doors.

Avoid electric appliances and metal plumbing and stay off the phone.

Do not seek shelter under a tree—they are easy targets.

Move to low ground and avoid open fields.

Whether at the beach or in a swimming pool, get out of the water immediately.

Do not touch metal objects, such as golf clubs or bicycles.

Inside a car is relatively safe, but do not touch interior metal.

If your hair stands on end, you may be a target. Crouch low on the balls of your feet and keep your knees and hands off the ground.

Taylor Electric Cooperative encourages you to always practice safety.