

Disasters Don't Plan Ahead, But You Should



MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT/CEO RYAN BARTLETT

BE PREPARED. IT'S A SCOUT'S TIMELESS MOTTO AND SAGE ADVICE for all of us. September is National Preparedness Month, a good opportunity to stress the importance of planning for the unexpected, particularly harsh storms, while affirming Taylor Electric Cooperative's commitment to doing the same in our own backyard.

A critical component of preparedness is having an emergency communication plan for your family. Something as simple as a list of names and phone numbers tucked away in a wallet or purse could make all the difference if the power goes out and your cellphone battery dies.



Co-ops have their own detailed communication plans for crises, when staying in touch becomes particularly important and our employees have to be able to reach one another and our members.

While a written contact list is vital, we also use technology to stay updated in the event of a rapidly unfolding situation. Electronic notifications are available for everything from changes in weather to voice messages from local law enforcement. Check with your county's office of emergency management or sheriff to sign up for alerts for your area. It makes sense to take advantage of all available tools in an emergency.

Finally, assemble an emergency supply kit to see you through a few days, with or without electricity.

The kit should include essential items such as water, nonperishable food, a battery-powered or hand-cranked radio, flashlight, batteries, a first-aid kit, medications and copies of important personal documents.

Keeping your vehicle's gas tank full and some cash on hand are also prudent steps. Maps of the area, pet supplies and activities to keep kids occupied could be important, as well. A few moments of rounding up many or all of these things into a bag or container and informing everyone in your home of its location could make a potentially dangerous situation merely unpleasant or, hopefully, just inconvenient.

Just as Taylor EC takes steps to be ready for whatever disasters may come our way, we encourage you to prepare now for your safety and that of your family.



There's Something Different About Your Electric Utility

THE WORD "COOPERATIVE" IN THE NAME

of any business means it operates a little bit differently from other organizations.

Like any nonprofit cooperative business, an electric cooperative belongs to the people who use it. So you and your neighbors who buy electricity from Taylor Electric Cooperative actually own the business.

As a member-owner of your electric cooperative, you're encouraged to attend the co-op's annual meeting and vote for the members of the board of directors. And if the cooperative has any money left over at the end of its fiscal year, after it pays its bills and takes care of business, you could even get a little money back.

More than 100 million Americans belong to some sort of cooperative business. The cooperative business model is used successfully in banking, food, agriculture, housing and insurance, among other industries. More than 900 electric utilities are organized as cooperatives, serving approximately 12 percent of the U.S. population.

Whether a co-op's members are its customers, employees or residents, they have an equal say in what the business does and a share in the profits. Like other cooperatives, Taylor EC is focused on providing the best service possible—not making profits.

Power Strips Versus Surge Protectors

AS THE PROLIFERATION OF ELECTRONICS IMPACTS OUR DAILY LIVES, SOME OF US realize there simply aren't enough outlets in our homes—particularly true for older homes. As a result, we end up with a number of power strips.

Before buying your next power strip or surge protector (the power strip's more talented cousin), consider the following several factors.

Power Strips

Look for power strips with a built-in circuit breaker. If you connect too many electronic devices, the strip will kick out the circuit breaker rather than causing the breaker in your electric panel to trip.

Pay attention to the orientation of the outlets. The typical design is along the length of the strip, facing the bottom or end of the strip, but strips with outlets perpendicular to the length of the strip may be a better choice.

Get a smart strip. With smart strips, one outlet serves as a master, receiving power all the time. The other outlets do not receive power until the master device is turned on. This is ideal for home entertainment setups.

Surge Protectors

If you are connecting expensive electronics, you may want to consider a surge protector that will protect equipment plugged into it from power surges. Price can be an important indicator of quality—a cheap surge protector could be worse than none at all due to shoddy surge-fighting components. When these components fail, the strip still provides power without any hint that its protective function has ceased.

Here are some key factors to consider when buying a surge protector.

Go for a joule rating of at least 600, a measure of how much energy it can withstand.

Consider cable and internet connection protection. Surges can enter via any wired connection. Be sure the protector is designed to handle a digital television. Otherwise, it can cause pixilation if it's only designed for analog signals.

It should have an indicator light to show if protection has burned out.

Power strips and surge protectors are worth the investment. Don't get burned by cheap, inefficient strips and protectors.



Taylor Electric Cooperative

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PRESIDENT/CEO

Ryan Bartlett

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HANDY WAYS TO PAY YOUR BILL

Online

taylorelectric.com

Taylor Electric App

Available on your Apple or Android device

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 Highway 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

- **United Supermarket**, 521 S. Access Road, Clyde
- **Food Plaza #4**, 109 S.E. Fifth St., Cross Plains
- **Cash Saver**, 155 Sayles Blvd., Abilene
- **United Supermarket**, 2160 Pine St., Abilene
- **Check Express**, 906 E. Broadway Ave., Sweetwater

Cash, checks, money orders and debit cards accepted.

Payments credited next business day.



Be a Good Neighbor to Power Lines

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD, YOU PROBABLY DON'T THINK ABOUT its power lines. It's easy to overlook their presence, but power lines can pose serious electrical hazards if forgotten.

Trees can be a power line's worst enemy. Strong winds and storms can blow trees over or break branches, pulling down power lines from poles or supporting towers. It is possible for the line to remain energized and potentially electrify the tree and nearby objects—especially when wet.

Arcing or flashovers between power lines and trees also can cause damage and danger. A voltage surge on a power line from a nearby lightning strike can cause a tree to become electrified, as well.

During warm weather or when power lines carry heavy electrical loads, they can heat up and stretch, making the lines longer. Thus, power lines can sag as much as 15 or 20 feet, bringing them even closer to trees.

The electric current caused by arcing or flashovers between power lines and trees easily can injure or even kill an individual caught nearby. It is important to pay attention to power lines in your neighborhood. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

Always make sure to look for power lines nearby before you begin to cut down any tree or trim branches. If a tree falls into a power line, do not attempt to move it. Contact Taylor Electric Cooperative immediately.

Treat all power lines as energized. Never climb or attempt to handle a tree that has a limb caught in a power line. There may not be any visible evidence that the tree is electrified or dangerous, but that doesn't mean it's not.

Make sure to maintain required clearances between equipment and power lines. Keep equipment and yourself at least 10 feet away from power lines at all times.



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Happy Labor Day!

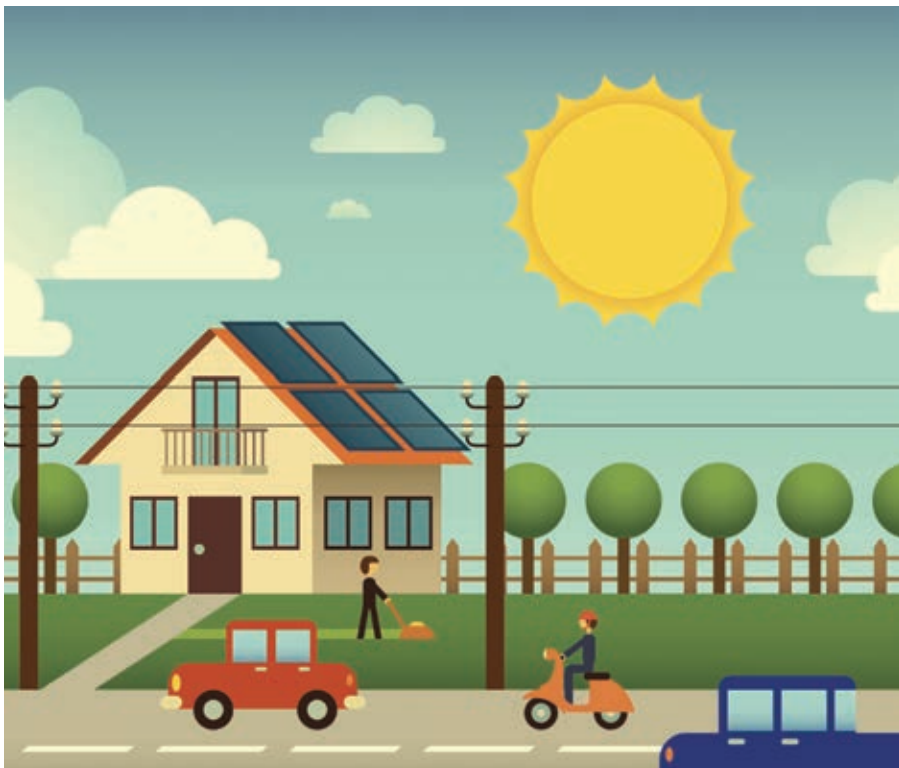
We will be closed Monday, September 3, for the holiday. As always, crews will be on standby in the event of an emergency.



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Power Tip

Look for LED products and fixtures for outdoor use, such as on pathways, steps and porches. Many include features like automatic day-light shut-off and motion sensors.



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Understanding How Your Appliances Use Energy

IF SOME OF YOUR APPLIANCES ARE GETTING old and will need to be replaced soon, it's time to do some homework. Your appliance choices can have a significant impact on your electric bill.

Your energy use varies month to month, so it can be difficult to see the difference any one appliance makes. Instead, it's best to think about how an appliance uses energy over its lifetime. Think about upfront and lifetime energy costs.

In a *Consumer Reports* test, the most efficient refrigerator used \$68 less in electricity per year than the least efficient model. Compound that difference over a decade or two, and the lifetime energy savings could be greater than the upfront cost. All it takes to get the best appliance for your needs is some research.

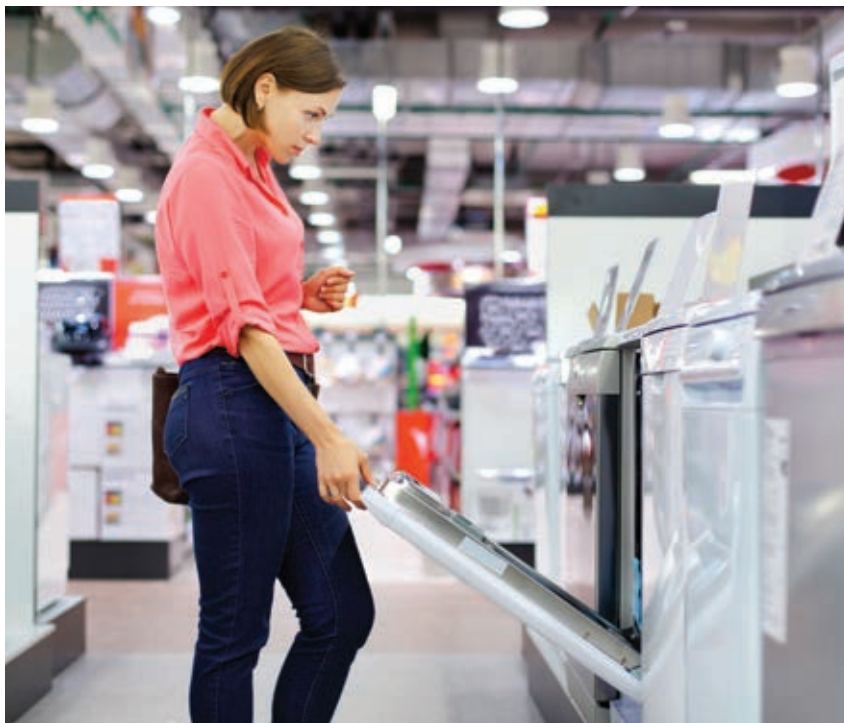
Appliances use less energy, on average, than home heating and cooling equipment but still can use several hundred dollars' worth each year. That dollar amount depends on factors like the model, how often it's used, the settings you use and even the time of day it's most used.

Over the past few decades, new appliances have become more energy efficient, driven partly by government standards. These requirements, created by the U.S. Department of Energy, save consumers more than \$60 billion each year by requiring appliances to include an EnergyGuide label that shows estimated energy use and operating costs per year. These estimates help you compare models and calculate initial costs against long-term savings.

Some appliances also will have an Energy Star label. This sticker indicates an appliance is substantially more efficient than the minimum standard. Your greatest energy savings opportunities can come from replacing an old appliance with an Energy Star-rated appliance. Removing a refrigerator that's 20 years old and replacing it with a new Energy Star model can lower its electricity costs by 75 percent.

In some cases, the way an appliance is configured also can make a significant difference. For example, the most efficient refrigerator models have the fridge compartment stacked on top of the freezer. All 36 of the most efficient clothes washers of 2018 were front-load models.

Consider how much you use the appliance, too. The more you use the appliance, the greater your savings from choosing a more efficient model. If you use the appliance less or have a small household, you may get by with a smaller refrigerator or freezer, which will save money.



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How you operate appliances also can make a difference. Here are some easy ways to save:

Refrigerator/Freezer

- ▶ Set your refrigerator at 35–38 degrees and your freezer at zero.
- ▶ Make sure there is adequate airflow between your home's wall and the back of the unit.
- ▶ Keep the refrigerator relatively full when possible.
- ▶ Replace the seals around the doors if they appear to be leaking air.

Stove/Oven

- ▶ Use the burner size that best matches the pan size.
- ▶ Use smaller appliances like a microwave or slow cooker instead of the oven when possible.

Dishwasher

- ▶ Use the most energy-efficient and shortest setting that gets your dishes clean.
- ▶ Air dry rather than using the heated dry function.
- ▶ Wait until the dishwasher is full before running it.

Make the most out of your appliance energy use with a little research before buying a new model and a few easy adjustments to the way you use them.