

Remember: When the Lights Go Out, Call for Help

We have just entered storm season. High winds, lightning, hail and other storm-related problems can cause power outages.

If you experience a power outage, please call the office at (254) 583-7955 or our new toll-free number 1-877-HOTEC-TX (468-3289). Although we have made many technological advances over the years, we still rely on our members to let us know when the power is out at their location. The

more precisely that dispatchers can determine the type and extent of the outage, the more quickly and accurately crews can restore the power.

So, please, if you have an outage, help us restore your power faster by reporting it to the office. When you call, please have your account number ready, as well as your 911 address and the time your power went out.

Remember, as cooperative employees, we are working for you.

CONSOLIDATION REMINDER

The consolidation between Belfalls Electric Cooperative and McLennan County Electric Cooperative will be effective as of July 1. Our new name will be Heart of Texas Electric Cooperative. Although numerous changes have already taken place, several more are to follow. We appreciate your patience and support during this transition period.

EVEN SUPERHEROES NEED TO BE CAREFUL AROUND ELECTRICITY

We all know the wonderful things electricity makes possible. There are TVs, radios, video games and computers. Not to mention that electricity keeps us warm in winter, cool in summer, cooks our food, heats our water, cleans our clothes, and keeps our homes and schools bright, even when there's no sun outdoors.

While we should be grateful for what electricity provides, we should also remember that electricity is powerful, and we must be careful when using it. Here are some kid-friendly tips on electrical safety:

- Never touch broken electrical cords or ones that have wire showing.
- Don't bite electrical cords. Now you may be laughing, but small children



and pets sometimes do bite these cords, and it is very dangerous.

- Never stick your finger or any object into light sockets or electrical outlets. Ask your mom or dad to buy plug covers so no one will get into trouble.
- Do not pull on cords to unplug them. Hold on to the plug.
- Do not touch anything electrical while you are wet or standing in water.
- Did you know that electricity can travel down kite strings or wires? Never fly kites or balloons near any power lines.
- Do not climb power poles or trees close to power lines.
- If one of your toys gets caught in electrical equipment, don't touch it. Find an adult to help you.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: NEW TOLL-FREE NUMBER

We now have a new toll-free number that allows our members to call without long-distance charges. This number dials directly into the office and can be used during regular business hours and for outage calls as well.

1-877-HOTEC-TX (468-3289)

MEMORIAL DAY

- Established as a national holiday on May 5, 1868, as a time for people across America to pause to reflect on the supreme sacrifice made by American soldiers who have died in service to the nation.
- The first observance was held at Arlington National Cemetery. Representatives of the U.S. government decorated the graves of soldiers on both sides of the Civil War.

The offices of Belfalls Electric Cooperative will be closed Monday, May 28, in observance of the holiday.

MAY IS ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH

Nearly 500 people die in electrical fires every year, and 5,000 are injured. And almost 150 people are electrocuted while using consumer products. One reason for the high casualties: old, faulty wiring.

During National Electrical Safety Month in May, examine your home's wiring and cords. If you find one that's out of date or unsafe, correct the problem immediately.

Here are some tips from Belfalls Electric Cooperative:

- Electrical systems installed

before 1970 were not designed to handle today's demands. Hire a licensed electrician to inspect your home for hazards.

- Read the safety warnings on extension cords. Plugging a high-voltage appliance into a low-voltage cord can start a fire. And keep those cords rated for indoor use out of outdoor sockets.

- Extension cords are for temporary use. They should not be used in high-traffic areas, tucked under carpets or furniture, or nailed or stapled to walls.

- Be sure your home has ground-fault circuit interrupters in bathrooms, the kitchen and the laundry room.

- Don't overload power strips, cords or surge suppressors. And get rid of adapters that allow you to plug three or four appliances into one socket.

IN EMERGENCIES

During regular business hours: **(254) 583-7955.**

Please contact our after-hours answering service in case of an outage not occurring during business hours:

(254) 583-7955 or 1-877-HOTECTX

CONSERVATION CORNER

Add an Energy Check to Yearly Cleaning List

Warm weather has a way of making things grow: flowers, grass, your to-do list. So what's one more task? While you're scrubbing and inspecting your home this spring, check for energy-efficiency around the house. Making a few energy-related repairs could help lower your electric bill all year long.

- While you're cleaning the windows, check for loose or leaky panes, and identify any single-paned windows. These energy no-nos allow cool air to escape from your home during the summer and steal heated air during the winter. That can raise your utility bill no matter the season. Replacing old, inefficient windows now is an investment that will pay for itself in energy savings.

- Light bulbs looking dim? Wipe them down to remove excess dust, and trash those incandescent bulbs. Compact fluorescent bulbs come in almost every size and mimic the glow of incandescents while using less energy—and they last up to 10 times longer.



- Replace your dirty air filters once a month. Dusty filters make your air-conditioning system work harder.

- Open the windows and enjoy the fresh air.

- Install a programmable thermostat, which automatically adjusts the temperature so you use less energy to heat your home when no one is there.

- Vacuum under and behind the refrigerator to remove dust build-up that decreases efficiency. If you use an extra fridge or freezer, turn it off

when not in use. If you use it year-round, keep it stocked or fill gaps with extra jugs of water or trays of ice so it will operate more efficiently.

- Before you scrub major appliances such as refrigerators, ovens or washers, check to see whether the model is Energy Star certified. If not, consider upgrading—Energy Star models use loads less energy and are worth the purchase price, even if your older, less-efficient appliance is still in working order.