

BELFALLS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

P.O. Box 598 • Rosebud, TX 76570 • Phone (254) 583-7955

A CLEAR RIGHT-OF-WAY SAVES YOU MONEY

Having your lights or appliances flicker on and off is something your co-op works hard to prevent!

Quite often, those frustrating blinking lights are caused by an electric power line's interaction with trees. Each power line is equipped with breakers to protect both the co-op's equipment and that of our members. When a tree limb brushes against a power line, particularly during windy or stormy weather, it can cause your lights to blink. If the contact is severe enough, your electricity will be interrupted.

According to the National Electric Code, all of Belfalls Electric Cooperative's overhead power lines should have a clear 30-foot easement (15 feet each side of center). Since the co-op doesn't own the property on which our poles are set, we depend on our members to allow us to do what is necessary to keep our right-of-way clear.

Belfalls Electric Cooperative prides itself on providing reliable electricity and excellent customer service, all while conducting our business within the cooperative business model.

A cooperative is a member-owned business with membership open to those who use its services. Democratically controlled and operated on a nonprofit basis, a cooperative returns margins to members on the basis of patronage.

Knowing how we run your business helps to understand why it is so important to us to keep the right-of-way clear. As a general rule of thumb, trees cause more than half of all outages, and those outages can be very costly to fix. If we can reduce the number of these avoidable outages, we can reduce spending and, in turn, increase the amount of money returned to you through capital credits.

Well-maintained rights-of-way are the only way to go. Not only does a clear right-of-way provide better power on a more reliable basis, it also allows easy access for outage and maintenance work that makes our job of keeping your lights on safer and less expensive.

We occasionally hear from members who are displeased with trimming, spraying or the removal of a tree on their property. We work very hard to choose the best way to trim or remove all trees that could be a threat to reliable electric service. We rely on you to allow our right-of-way representatives to do what is necessary to prevent such occurrences.

The equitable treatment of all members to benefit the whole cooperative lies at the heart of cooperative business. We do not play favorites when it comes to making sure the lines are clear. Without the cooperation of everyone along a given easement, the power to all is negatively affected.

As a homeowner, you can help us help you by making sure we know if there is a tree around your home that needs to be removed in order to keep the right-of-way clear.

If you have any questions about our right-of-way programs or policies, please give us a call.

LIFE SUPPORT: MAKE PLANS IN CASE OF OUTAGE

For people who rely on life-support equipment at home, a blackout could be a matter of life or death. If someone in your home depends on an electrically operated health aid, take these steps to prepare for power outages.

- Plug electronic devices into surge suppressors and consider using uninterruptible power supplies (UPS) on important devices. A UPS acts as a battery backup and can provide electricity to some devices for several hours.

- Consider investing in a portable

generator that can power vital equipment in the event of an extended blackout. Consult with a qualified electrician before installing the device.

- Make arrangements to move in temporarily with friends or family, or even go to a hospital during a power failure if a generator is impractical.

- Keep an adequate supply of prescription drugs and medical equipment on hand in case a storm prevents you from going out for refills.

- Recharge cell phones frequently so you're not caught with a dead bat-

tery when the power goes out. Keep a corded land line operating in your home, as cordless phones need power and will not work without electricity.

- Let your electric cooperative know that someone in your home relies on electrically powered medical equipment so your home will receive priority treatment during a weather emergency.

- Report all outages quickly.

- Ask the electric cooperative to notify you in advance of scheduled outages.

MAKE A HOME INVENTORY IN CASE OF FIRE OR THEFT

It's a lot easier to fill out insurance forms or make a police report after a fire, flood or burglary if you keep a record of the things in your home.

A detailed inventory of your electronics—from digital cameras to high-definition TVs—will help your insurance company fill claims faster and help you keep better track of your possessions and their value.

To get started:

- Write down as much information as you can get from each appliance, including its make, model, serial



number, purchase price, replacement price, warranty information, current appraisals and a photo of each item. If

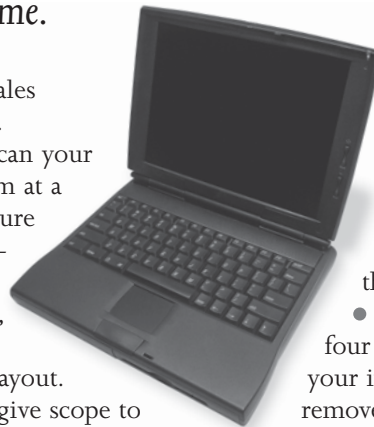
you have the sales receipt, keep it.

- Visually scan your home one room at a time to make sure you don't overlook anything. For each room, photograph or videotape the layout. This will help give scope to the size of a loss and add more detail to your written descriptions.

- Take group pictures of less-expensive items, such as CDs or handheld equipment, and individual snapshots of costly appliances, such as a stereo system or computer.

- In the photos, capture in detail any unusual features of your electronics, including serial numbers. Date every photo and videotape you make.

- Store your inventory in a secure place in your home in a fireproof safe. Store a copy of the inventory outside the home in a safe deposit box or at a



family member's home.

- Don't limit your inventory to electronic equipment. Catalog other valued possessions, like jewelry, furniture, artwork and other important objects throughout your home.
- Update your inventory every four to six months. Add receipts to your inventory for new purchases and remove entries for items you no longer own.

Many people learn after fires or thefts that they had insufficient insurance coverage. A detailed, up-to-date home inventory will let you know how much your possessions are worth.



APRIL IS NATIONAL LAWN CARE MONTH

It's time to trim bushes and edge sidewalks. But first, dust the tools off, apply a little oil, and make sure they're still safe to use.

During April, which is National Lawn Care Month and the first full month of spring, take a few minutes to maintain your lawn equipment so it can help you maintain your lawn all summer.

- Buy the best extension cords you can afford. Replace any that show signs of wear. Be aware of where all extension cords are located while you're working in the yard so you don't accidentally snip one in half. And consider installing an outdoor ground-fault circuit interrupter outlet

to protect yourself from shocks.

- Keep your electric edger oiled and rust-free. Remove any sticky residue with alcohol and scrape off rust with a metal brush.

- Sharpen the edger and lawn mower blades with a file or whetstone to keep them running efficiently. A dull lawn mower blade can cause the tips of your grass to brown.

- Store electric tools in a dry place. Excessive moisture can damage some power tools. If a tool gets wet while you're using it, dry it with a towel before putting it away.

- Before servicing an electric tool, remove its batteries or unplug it.

IN EMERGENCIES

During regular business hours, call:
(254) 583-7955

These are telephone numbers to call to report outages after business hours and on weekends and holidays.

Kenneth Fikes(254) 583-4556

Larry Koslosky(254) 583-4555

Doug Matous(254) 583-2957

Bobby Skala(254) 583-7219

Ernest Martin(254) 583-2219

Joe W. Marek(254) 583-4016

James Campbell(254) 583-2786

Jeremy Tepe(254) 583-2557