

PowerLines

September 2024

Labor Day: unofficial end of summer

Labor Day typically signifies the end of summer, even though there are still a few weeks remaining before the autumnal equinox and the calendrical fall season begins. We hope you enjoyed your summer activities. Now it is back to school related activities, another harvest year, and football and the related fall activities.

The last portion of my summer has been challenging. I managed to tear an Achilles tendon playing squash (like racquetball) in mid-July. Hopefully, as you read this, I have begun walking in a boot with no crutches. I have a new appreciation for my age and normal health and simply the ability to walk. Please be careful this harvest season. Make safety your priority in all activities. On my daily round trip commute (an hour total) on Interstate 57, I unfortunately observe many, many distracted and otherwise unsafe drivers every day. Remember to exercise extra awareness on our local rural roads and intersections, especially during the harvest season. For those harvesting, plan your work, slow down, and always be aware of everything around you.

Congratulations to newly retired Tim Kulow!

I want to say a few things about Tim, who recently retired after 41 years of providing dedicated and conscientious service to our members. He began as a groundman and retired as the Electric System Engineering Foreman. Tim leaves an impressive legacy to EIEC in many areas including line construction and maintenance, substations and related equipment, SCADA, radio systems, two new metering systems, and billing and operations. Tim has been instrumental in setting up our solar program and interacting with developers and members. One example of Tim's resourcefulness to share – On Veteran's Day in 2019, the Paxton guyed radio tower (over three hundred feet tall) toppled due to age, icing, and wind conditions. This tower was the hub for the EIEC system for receipt of meter communications data, outage information, and billing information. In a very short time,

Tim and other employees developed a unique temporary solution. They installed a spare "base" antenna on the extended boom of our tallest forestry truck. It worked beyond expectations until the replacement free standing tower was completed in the summer of 2020. (see photo below)

Best wishes for a happy, long, and prosperous retirement to Tim and his wife Ann. Thank you for everything!

Stay Safe,

Bob Hunzinger



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- View your bill
- Make a payment
- Compare usage by month
- Review known issues
- Report an outage
- Update account information

SmartHub is available online or through an application on your cell phone. Sign up today!

DO WE HAVE YOUR CURRENT CONTACT INFORMATION?

These days, many members have disconnected their landlines and are using cell phones exclusively. Do we have your most current contact information? Give us a call at 800-824-5102 and let's review your phone number and email address.

Your Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative

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NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE SAFETY OF YOU AND OTHERS

Go above and beyond for a safe harvest

Electrical safety during harvest requires vigilance. Take proactive measures & follow these tips to reduce the risk of electrical accidents.

- Maintain at least a 10-foot distance from power lines when operating equipment like grain augers, elevators and other tall machinery.
- Use a spotter to navigate safely around power lines and other electrical equipment.
- Ensure all farm workers are trained on electrical safety procedures.
- Regularly inspect all electrical equipment and machinery for signs of wear and damage.
- Keep first aid kits and emergency contact numbers in an easily accessible location.



while it is moving near power lines.

Lower equipment extensions, portable augers or elevators before moving or transporting equipment.

Do not raise equipment, such as ladders, poles, or rods into power lines. Remember that non-metallic materials like lumber, tree limbs, ropes, and hay can conduct electricity, especially when damp, dusty or dirty.

Never attempt to raise or move power lines to clear a path. Doing so could result in electric shock or death.

Modern farming often relies on data, auto-guidance, and equipment with GPS. However, even with these modern conveniences, farm workers must remain vigilant. That's because farming is considered one of the most dangerous jobs. Massive machinery is indispensable to farming, but the same impressive size, height and extensions make them particularly vulnerable to contacting power lines. That's why staying alert, focused and knowledgeable about potential hazards and safety procedures is crucial.

During a busy harvest season, the familiar sights around the farm can easily fade into the background, and overhead power lines can be easily overlooked; however, failing to notice them can lead to deadly accidents. It's important to stay safe during harvest.

360 Awareness

Awareness of your surroundings, around, above and below, and planning safe equipment routes can significantly reduce the risk of accidents. Even with

GPS and auto-steering, it's imperative that farm workers keep a close eye on the equipment's location and are ready to take action if necessary.

Exposed underground powerlines, defective wiring in farm buildings and extension cords are also hazards. Grain bins can pose a potential danger as well. The National Electrical Safety Code requires power lines to be at least 18 feet above the highest point on any grain bin with which portable augers or other portable filling equipment are used. If you plan to install new grain bins contact us at 800-824-5102 to discuss.

Smart Harvest Safety Tips

Here are some tips to avoid electrical accidents on the farm this harvest season:

Exercise caution near power lines. Be careful when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.

Use spotters when operating large machinery near power lines. Ensure the spotters do not touch the machinery

Avoid using metal poles inside bins. Don't use metal poles to break up bridged grain inside or around bins.

Hire qualified electricians. Ensure that qualified electricians handle work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.

While rare, the only reason to exit equipment that has come in to contact with overhead lines is if the equipment is on fire. However, if it happens, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the machinery and the ground at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, bunny hop to safety as you leave the area.

Farmers face many hazards and risks during harvest. Farming safety requires a significant effort to ensure you go home unharmed to your family daily.

As harvest gets underway, go above and beyond for a safe and successful harvest.

TIPS FOR USING LESS ENERGY AND SAVING MONEY

Welcome home to energy efficiency

Energy efficiency is about using less energy for the same tasks, which can save you money in the long run. By understanding how energy is used, identifying areas for improvement and enhancement, you can use energy more effectively and efficiently.

While most Americans are aware of their financial status, many overlook their home's energy dynamics. Just as you track your income and expenses, it's important to understand the energy flowing in and out of your home. Electricity is constantly at work in your home, powering many gadgets, heating, cooling, and lighting. Recognizing and managing this energy flow can lead to significant benefits to you. Here are some top technologies to consider when evaluating energy efficiency in your home.

A smart thermostat

Smart thermostats are one of the easiest ways to improve your home's energy efficiency. They allow you to remotely control your home's heating and cooling systems and learn to manage your habits more effectively.

Energy efficient HVAC systems

Investing in energy-efficient HVAC systems is essential to reducing energy consumption and maintaining comfort.

Modern systems ensure efficiency and reliability. Regular maintenance and timely inspections can keep your system running smoothly and efficiently.

LED light source

LED bulbs use 75% less energy than traditional incandescent bulbs. They also last 25 times longer and are more affordable than ever costing about \$3.

Switching to LED lighting is a simple but effective way to reduce your overall energy consumption.

Energy efficient devices

Modern appliances are designed to use less power without sacrificing efficiency. Always look for the ENERGY STAR label when purchasing new appliances to ensure you are getting the most efficient model available.

Energy efficient windows

Energy efficient windows can significantly reduce energy losses and improve comfort. Look for windows with low U-factor and low-emitting (Low-E) coatings to maximize energy efficiency. Consider installing double or triple pane windows for added insulation.

Insulation and sealing

Proper insulation and coatings are needed to maintain an attractive indoor environment and reduce energy consumption. Here are some tips: Insulate attic walls: Proper insulation in the attic and walls can prevent heat loss in the winter and keep your home cool in the summer. Seal air leaks: Seal gaps around windows, doors, and other openings with

with caulk and weatherstripping. Insulate ducts: Make sure your HVAC ducts are properly insulated to prevent energy loss.

Behavioral change

Even small changes in behavior can help improve energy efficiency.

- Turn off the light when not in use.
- Unplug electronic devices when not in use to prevent "phantom" power consumption.
- Set your thermostat to a low temperature in the winter and a high temperature in the summer when you are away from home.
- Use energy efficient systems on appliances such as washing machines, dishwashers, and refrigerators.

By embracing the latest technology and making smart enhancements, you can save money on your monthly electric bill. Improving energy efficiency is a win-win.



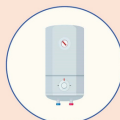
Stay safe baby!

TIPS FOR BABY PROOFING YOUR HOME

Safely store medicine & cleaning supplies.



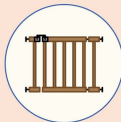
Set water heaters to 125 degrees or less.



Anchor heavy furniture.



Install baby gates.



Check batteries in smoke & carbon monoxide detectors.



Cover unused electrical sockets.



Creating a safe environment for babies at home is essential to promote their well-being and prevent accidents. Besides electrical safety, it's important to take into consideration overall home safety when it comes to little ones.

Hazardous Substances:

Lock away in a high location cleaning products, medications and other chemicals or poisons found in the house. Be mindful of household plants that could be toxic if ingested.

September is designated as Baby Safety Month, so we want to share some tips for avoiding electrical hazards involving babies and toddlers.

With a new baby at home, you've got a lot on your mind. You can remove a lot of worry by examining and updating your safety devices. It's a good idea to walk around the entire house including the garage, to map out all electrical outlets. You need to do two things:

1. Use outlet plugs for all unused outlets to prevent an electric shock if the baby crawls over and sticks their little finger in there. The low-to-the-ground proximity of most electrical outlets makes them an easy target for curious babies.

2. Get outlet covers (also called outlet slides, boxes, or receptacle covers) for in-use electrical cords to keep babies from pulling them out.

All charging cords for phones, laptops, and other devices should be shortened or tucked away so that a baby cannot tug on it and put it in their mouth or even chew on it, which could cause a serious electric shock.

Here are some additional ways to protect your child:

Be aware of hazards in the bathroom:

The bathroom is one of the most common locations for electrical hazards. Hair dryers, cell phones, electric razors and other appliances are often used here, near water. Never leave small children alone in the bathroom to ensure they don't accidentally knock an electrical appliance into the water and harm themselves.

Keep night lights out of reach: Night lights - especially those shaped like animals or cartoon characters - may be tempting for children to play with, so keep them out of reach to prevent electrocution and burns.

Examine older appliances: Older electrical appliances may pose a fire hazard in your home, which is why you should check to see if any wires are frayed or appear scorched. If so, replace them. Not only do they pose a hazard to your child, they could potentially cause a fire.

Educate your children: When your children get a little older, warn them about the dangers of electricity. Explain how it could potentially harm them and show them the proper way to do things.

Hide electrical cords: Electrical cords pose several dangers. Not only do they lead to electrical outlets, but they also pose a choking risk. Keep electrical cords out of sight by either tying them up or placing them up high and out of reach of kids.

Water Heaters and Water Safety: Set water heaters to 125 degrees or less and never leave baby unattended by bodies of water such as pools, bathtubs or buckets.

Furniture: Anchor heavy furniture, soften sharp edges, and avoid placing crib near curtains, blinds are any choking hazards.

Child proof the home: Use baby gates where appropriate - think about cabinets, drawers, and stairs.

Batteries in smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors: Make it a habit to regularly check the batteries and replace them on a set schedule. Also, keep coin lithium batteries, or button batteries, and any devices that contain them, out of reach of children as they can be fatal if swallowed.

Important Tip: Make sure these same cautions are taken wherever your baby spends time such as at a daycare, their grandparent's home, or another home where they are in the care of someone else. Babies are a cherished commodity. Follow these tips to provide the safest environment for our precious littles. Putting babies' safety first is always a high priority.

CLASS IS IN SESSION: ELECTRIC SAFETY TIPS FOR EVERY STUDENT

Electrical safety's the rule for back-to-school

The new school year has just begun. Since school is all about learning new things, we are sharing some electrical safety tips that are useful for students of all ages.

K - 8TH GRADE

An average of seven children are admitted to emergency rooms each day with shock or burn injuries due to tampering with electrical outlets.

- Keep fingers, writing utensils, paperclips and other objects away from electrical outlets.
- When unplugging electronics, always hold the base of the plug to pull it out. Never yank from the cord.
- Stay clear of pad-mounted transformers, power lines at school and along the way to school. Never climb trees near power lines.
- Never throw shoes onto power lines and if you see them already hanging, do not try to take them off.

HIGH SCHOOL

- If you've just received the privilege of driving to school with your newly-obtained driver's license, pay close to attention on those morning and afternoon drives for utility crews who are working near the roads you travel.
- Should you be involved in an accident involving a power line or pole, assume live electricity is outside of the car and use extreme caution.
- If you see a downed power line, assume the line is energized and stay away from it. Call 911 to report it.
- Be cautious in science classes, especially those with labs, as it's likely your hands, or the area near you, will get wet. Keep everything dry and use caution when plugging in equipment.
- Don't sleep with your cell phone in the bed. It can disrupt your sleep patterns and may be a fire hazard. Keep phones and hair dryers away from water.

COLLEGE

- Get in the habit of unplugging devices that are not in use. Don't overload electrical outlets. Many dorms and campus housing are not equipped to handle today's use of electronics. Choose a power strip with a heavy-gauge cord that are approved by a recognized certification agency.
- Keep extension cords out from under rugs or furniture as this could damage the cord and it is a fire hazard.
- Keep all electrical appliances and cords away from bedding, curtains and other flammable materials. The heat from a laptop charger or mini-fridge can start an electrical fire if left in contact with flammable material for too long.

We hope all students returning to the classroom - and their families - have a safe and enjoyable school year!



**ATTENTION
TEACHERS
GRADES 3 -5**

FALL 2024 ELECTRIC SAFETY DEMONSTRATIONS



Teaching about the dangers of electricity and how to stay safe around electricity is a top priority at Eastern Illini. We offer 30 minute safety presentations to students in grades 3 -5. We will work with your schedule and curriculum. We can set up back to back presentations for an entire grade. It's a free service, so call us today to schedule your electric safety demonstration!

Complete the request form on the Eastern Illini website:
<https://www.eiec.org/school-presentations>

Contact: Andy Schaumburg

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