



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

501 S. Huston Ave, P.O. Box 368, Altamont, KS 67330

866-784-5500

www.twinvalleyelectric.coop

TWIN VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

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Contact Us
501 S. Huston Ave., P.O. Box 368
Altamont, KS 67330
620-784-5500
www.twinvalleyelectric.coop

Holiday Office Closing



Our office will be closed on November 24-25 for Thanksgiving. We hope you have a safe

and happy holiday.

FROM THE MANAGER

Attaching Objects to Poles Puts Lives on the Line



Ron Holsteen

What do yard sale signs, basketball hoops, deer stands, satellite dishes and birdhouses have in common? They're often found illegally attached to utility poles. This isn't only

a crime of inconvenience. Safety issues caused by unapproved pole attachments place the lives of lineworkers and the public in peril.

It may seem innocent, but a small nail partially driven into a pole can have deadly results around high-voltage electricity.

Our line crews climb utility poles at all hours of the day and night, in the worst of conditions. Anything attached to utility poles can create serious hazards for our line personnel. Sharp objects like nails, tacks, staples, or barbed wire can puncture rubber gloves and other safety equipment, making linemen vulnerable to electrocution.

Lineworkers with electric co-ops have reported poles used as community bulletin boards, satellite mounts, and even support legs for deer stands, lights and carports. These attachments don't just put line crews at risk, anyone illegally placing these items on poles comes dangerously close to energized power lines with thousands of volts of energy pulsing overhead. It's always wise to keep

any structure at least 10 feet away from utility poles.

Unauthorized pole attachments violate the National Electrical Safety Code, the accepted manual containing guidelines for safe electrical engineering standards. Utilities strictly follow this code that includes a section that reads, "signs, posters, notices, and other attachments shall not be placed on supporting structures without concurrence of the owner (the utility is the owner of the pole). Supporting structures should be kept free from other climbing hazards such as tacks, nails, vines, and through bolts not properly trimmed."

Please help us keep our linemen—and our community—safe. Don't attach

any of these unauthorized and dangerous items to utility poles. Fixtures not belonging to the cooperative or another utility will be removed by co-op line personnel; the co-op is not responsible for any losses if an item is damaged or destroyed during removal.



Satellite dishes and other unauthorized attachments must be removed to protect lineworkers.

NOTES FROM OPERATIONS

Turn Up the Heat—How to Select a Space Heater

Cooler temperatures have arrived in Kansas, and with that come questions about efficiency in heating homes.

A good portion of our membership uses fireplaces that are the ultimate in inexpensive heating. A little preparation and work, cutting and splitting, can lead to great savings when the mercury falls. A question we get a lot is—what to do to supplement the heating when the fireplace just isn't enough?

Space heaters are generally used to fill the needs for heat in particular places and it is a knee-jerk reaction to run down to the local mega-store and pick up whatever is on the shelf. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but a little homework might lead to more efficiency and a safer heater for you and your family.

When looking at space heaters, safety is the most important. Remember, your basic electric space heater is just a wire (element) stretched between a positive and negative that creates a short in which the wire glows red hot and a fan forces the heat from the element into the area you want to heat. In a nutshell, think of a giant incandescent light bulb.

How many times have you reached under a lamp shade to remove a 60 watt bulb that just went out and you burn the end of your fingers? That is just 60 watts; can you imagine reaching in and trying to unscrew a 1,500 watt bulb? Doesn't sound very pleasant, does it?

Underwriters Laboratories (UL) require that all electric space heaters have an emergency shut-off that will turn off the unit if it is bumped or tipped. This works fine unless one of your little ones wants to stick his or her hand inside to explore the new device. The safety grate on the front will keep most adult hands out, but it might not work as well for the little ones.

A few years ago, ceramic heaters came out and have been growing in popularity as they work out the kinks and the price drops. The ceramic heaters work by heating oil in a vessel and then forcing the air out via fans and vents. The heat source is not exposed, which makes them safer to have around the family and Fluffy or Fido.



Before buying a space heater, consider the size needed for the space you plan to use the heater.

The prices for these units have steadily dropped and are now competitive with better electric space heaters. Yes, you can find cheaper space heaters, but remember you get what you pay for.

Once you determine the type of space heater you want to use, you need to determine the size needed. As with everything, bigger does not mean better.

A simple way to figure the size needed is to measure the room. Measure the width and the length of the room. Multiply the two measurements and the total will be the square footage. For example, a 12' x 12' room equals 144 square feet. When you have the square footage, you will need to figure out the needed wattage of the space heater. Generally you want to estimate 10 watts per square foot. So in the above scenario, you multiply:

$$12' \times 12' = 144 \text{ sq ft} \times 10 \text{ watts} = 1,440 \text{ watts}$$

The next step is to convert watts into BTUs (British Thermal Units). A single watt is equal to 3.41 BTUs, so multiply your total wattage by 3.41. As in the same scenario as above, your formula will look like this:

$$12' \times 12' = 144 \text{ sq ft} \times 10 \text{ watts} = 1,440 \text{ watts} \times 3.41 \text{ BTUs} = 4,910 \text{ BTUs}$$

A standard space heater, regardless of the type you chose, will provide approximately 5,100 BTUs or 1,500 watts. This means that a standard size space heater is more than adequate for a 144 square foot room. Before you decide, consider factors such as the number of windows, which allow heat to escape, insulation and amount of open space in the room, as well as whether the room might have a staircase or high ceilings that will let the heat rise out of the room. Any of these factors may require a more powerful heater.

I hope I've been able to shed some light on space heaters. Until next month, have a happy Thanksgiving and enjoy time with your family.



William Worthy

“A little homework might lead to more efficiency and a safer heater for you and your family.”