



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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www.twinvalleyelectric.coop

**TWIN VALLEY
ELECTRIC CO-OP**

NEWS

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It's a Matter of (Co-op!) Principles



Angie Erickson

ACE Hardware, State Farm, REI, Land O'Lakes and Twin Valley Electric all share something in common: We're all cooperatives.

We may be in different

industries, but we all share a passion for serving our members and helping our communities to thrive. In fact, all cooperatives adhere to the same set of seven principles that reflect our core values of honesty, transparency, and service to the greater community good. October is National Co-op Month, so this is the perfect time to reflect on these principles that have stood the test of time but also provide a framework for the future. Let's take a look at the first three cooperative principles.

Voluntary and Open Membership

Just like all co-ops, Twin Valley Electric was created out of necessity — to

meet a need that would have been otherwise unmet in the rural community. So in 1945, a group of neighbors banded together and organized our electric co-op so everyone in our community could have the benefit of electricity. For a modest membership fee to the co-op, any farmer in our service territory could get electricity brought to his farm. Neighbors came together to tackle a problem that they all had but couldn't solve alone.

While this history may be forgotten, key parts of that heritage remain — the focus on our mission and serving the greater good. We call on everyone to improve the quality of life and economic opportunity for the entire community. Membership is open to everyone in our service territory, regardless of race, religion, age, disability, gender, language, political perspective or socioeconomic status.

Democratic Member Control

Our co-op is well suited to meet the

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FALL BACK

Don't forget to turn
your clocks back
one hour on Nov. 7.

TOP 9 ENERGY VAMPIRES

If you collect your spare change in a jar, all those coins add up over time, usually to a larger amount than expected.

Small amounts of consumed energy throughout your home add up as well. Plug “energy vampires” into a smart power strip that detects dormant devices or unplug items when not in use, especially those with illuminated controls.



Discuss Electrical Safety With Kids

Oftentimes, when the topic of electronics and children comes up, the conversation gravitates toward the pros and cons of screen time or maybe trading tips on the best educational apps. However, an often-overlooked topic is how to talk to your children about the potential safety hazards associated with electronics, sources of electricity and their environment in general. As soon as children can walk, parents and caregivers should discuss with them how to be safe around electricity, both inside the home and when playing outdoors.

Twin Valley Electric recommends sharing these outdoor safety tips with children of all ages:

- ▶ Do not touch or go near a sagging or downed power line. Instead, tell an adult to call the electric utility to report it.
- ▶ Never climb trees near power lines.
- ▶ Fly kites, model airplanes, remote-control flying toys and drones in large, open areas, such as parks or fields, far away from power lines. If any of these items (or any item or object) gets caught in a power line, never try to retrieve it. Tell an adult to call the electric utility for help.
- ▶ Never fly kites or other toys when a thunderstorm may be approaching.
- ▶ Never climb a utility pole or tower. The electricity carried through this equipment could kill you.
- ▶ Never go into an electric substation for any reason. Electric substations contain high-voltage equipment, which can kill you. Never rescue a pet or retrieve a ball or toy that goes inside the fenced area surrounding a substation. Tell an adult to call the electric utility instead.
- ▶ Always stay away from outdoor electrical equipment marked “keep out,” “high voltage” or “danger.”
- ▶ Do not play, sit or climb on a pad-mount transformer, a.k.a. green box. Note to adults: While green boxes are typically safe to be around, it is better to leave this equipment alone

Many electrical injuries and fires can be prevented. It is never too early or too late to start talking about electrical safety with your children and loved ones.

just in case a box has become unlocked or vandalized, or the contents or box have become damaged in some way — by a roadside accident or unwelcomed varmints or ants.

Please call us to report an unlocked cabinet or any signs of damage.

Additionally, share the following indoor safety tips with children:

- ▶ Do not play with electrical cords or plugs.
- ▶ Younger children should ask an adult before plugging in or unplugging something. In addition, never pull or tug on cords. Instead, gently pull the plug out of the wall by grasping the plug, not the cord.
- ▶ Do not touch or use cords that appear damaged.
- ▶ Keep cords away from heat and water.
- ▶ Never stick fingers, tongues, toys or other body parts or objects into electrical outlets or light sockets.
- ▶ Never sleep with phones, tablets or other electronics in the bed or under a pillow. The electronic device can overheat or experience a short in the charging cable, causing bedding to catch on fire, burns to the skin or electric shock.
- ▶ Never play with electronic toys or gadgets in the bathtub or other water.
- ▶ Never touch appliances, switches, outlets, sockets, cords or plugs with wet hands or while standing in water. Parents should keep towels near bathroom and kitchen sinks so little hands can be dried right after they are washed.

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Think Safety When Operating a Generator

A generator can be a valuable piece of equipment to keep appliances working during a power outage. Generators can be either temporarily or permanently installed.

A permanent generator is wired into a house by a qualified electrician using a transfer switch that prevents a generator from feeding electricity back into overhead lines, which can be deadly for linemen.

A temporary generator is powered by gasoline and should not be attached to a circuit breaker, fuse, or outlet. Before purchasing a generator you need to know the wattage required to run the appliances you will attach to the generator. You also need to know the surge power, which is the power it takes to turn on an appliance.

Once you have purchased the proper generator, follow these tips from Safe Electricity to properly operate your generator:

- ▶ Read and follow all manufacturer operating instructions to properly ground the generator. Be sure you understand them before connecting the generator.
- ▶ Never operate a generator in a confined area, such as a garage or shed. Generators can produce numerous gases, including toxic and deadly carbon monoxide. They require proper ventilation.
- ▶ Generators pose electrical risks especially when operated in wet conditions. Use a generator only as necessary when the weather creates wet or moist conditions. Protect

the generator by operating it under an open, canopy-like structure on a dry surface where water cannot form puddles or drain under it. Always ensure that your hands are dry before touching the generator.

- ▶ When you refuel the generator, make sure the engine is cool to prevent a fire, should the tank overflow.
- ▶ There should be nothing plugged into the generator when you turn it on. This prevents a surge from damaging your generator and appliances.
- ▶ Be sure to keep children and pets away from the generator, which could burn them.
- ▶ Shut down the generator properly. Before shutting down a generator, turn off and unplug all appliances and equipment being powered by the generator.
- ▶ Remember maintenance between uses. It is also a good idea to inspect the fuel and oil filters, spark plug, oil level and fuel quality and to start the generator on a regular basis before an emergency occurs.

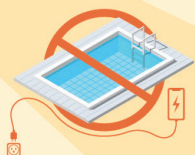
ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Old, uninsulated and improperly installed exterior doors can waste energy and money. Shut the door on wasted energy by weather stripping and sealing all exterior doors. If you have an old exterior door, consider replacing it with a newer, energy-efficient model.

SOURCE: ENERGY.GOV



A TIME TO CHARGE AND A TIME TO UNPLUG 4 PLACES NOT TO USE A PLUGGED-IN DEVICE



IN OR NEAR A POOL OR HOT TUB

Water and electricity are a deadly combination. Electrical current running through water can cause shock or electrocution.



IN THE TUB OR BY THE SINK

Never extend your cell phone or device so that you can reach it while bathing. Also, do not plug it in near standing or running water.



IN BED OR OTHER SOFT SURFACES

A device can overheat when placed on or under a pillow or soft bedding. Also, charging cubes and cords can malfunction, causing burns, shock or other serious injuries.



HEAR THUNDER OR SEE LIGHTNING

Lightning can cause power surges that are not only harmful to electrical (charging) devices but also to you.

It's a Matter of (Co-op!) Principles

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needs of our members because we are locally governed. Each member gets a voice and a vote in how the co-op is run, and each voice and vote are equal. Twin Valley's employees live right here in the community. Our board of directors, who set policy and long-term priorities for the co-op, also live locally on co-op lines. These board members have been elected by neighbors just like you. We know our members have a valuable perspective, and we encourage their input.

Our close connection to this community ensures we get a first-hand perspective on members' priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions.

Members' Economic Participation

As a utility, our mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to our members. But as a co-op, we are also motivated by service to the community, rather than profits. Through our rates, members contribute to, and democratically control, the capital of Twin Valley. While the majority of the amount billed to our members covers the operating expenses for that month, a small portion is kept as capital of the cooperative. That capital is invested in system improvements that ensure our electric system will provide reliable energy to our members well into the future.

Because we are guided by Seven Cooperative Principles, it's not just about dollars — it's about opportunity for all and being fair when engaging with our members. The cooperative way is a values-based business model.

Twin Valley Electric is a reflection of our local community and its evolving needs. We embrace our role in making our corner of the world a better place. This sums up the Seventh Co-op Principle, Concern for Community, which our cooperative routinely celebrates.

Discuss Electrical Safety With Kids

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Teach Children About Electrical Safety Around Water

Let children and teens know that water and electricity are a dangerous combination. Tell them to:

- ▶ Ask permission from an adult before swimming.
- ▶ Never go swimming when thunder and lightning are present.
- ▶ Be careful with electrical wires around pools, lakes or other bodies of water. Make sure cords are not frayed or worn.
- ▶ Avoid touching overhead electrical wires when carrying a long object, such as a pool skimmer or ladder.
- ▶ Never touch any electrical tools, appliances or toys when you are

wet or standing in a puddle, pool or body of water. Many electrical shocks occur from people holding phones and tablets that are attached to chargers and plugged in while they are in the water or standing on a damp surface. This applies to both outdoor water recreation and sources inside the house (e.g., sinks and bathtubs).

- ▶ Stay out of the water if a pool light is flickering, and tell an adult.
- ▶ Get out of the water immediately if being in the water causes prickly, tingling or other unusual sensations, which could mean you are being exposed to stray electrical current. Report this to an adult as well.
- ▶ Never touch appliances, switches, outlets, sockets, cords or plugs with wet hands or while standing in water. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

PASSWORD DO'S AND DON'TS

A strong password can make all the difference in protecting your personal information.

Follow these tips for stronger passwords.



DO

- ▶ Change the manufacturer's Wi-Fi password on your router.
- ▶ Use two-factor authentication.
- ▶ Use unique phrases (like lyrics to your favorite song) to remember passwords.

DON'T

- ▶ Don't use common words or numbers like "password" or "1234."
- ▶ Don't use personal details like your date of birth in a password.
- ▶ Don't use the same password for multiple accounts.

**October is
Cybersecurity
Awareness Month.**

Do Your Part. #BeCyberSmart