



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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**TWIN VALLEY
ELECTRIC CO-OP**

NEWS

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TVEC Congratulates Kelly Walker on His Retirement

Twin Valley Electric recently honored **KELLY WALKER**, foreman lineman, as he retired after nearly 40 years of service to the cooperative. During a reception in his honor, the cooperative and the employee group presented Kelly with gifts which included a lineman sculpture. On behalf of our membership, we thank Kelly for his service and wish him the best in retirement.



During his retirement celebration, Kelly Walker (front center) was congratulated by fellow Twin Valley Electric Cooperative linemen.



Kelly Walker, foreman lineman, retired on Dec. 2, 2022, after nearly 40 years of service to the cooperative and its members.

Interested in Serving on the Board of Trustees?

Twin Valley will begin the search for board of trustees candidates in January. Board members represent the interests of the members in directing the business and affairs of the cooperative. They establish the strategic direction for the cooperative based on their members' needs, interests and desires.

If you are interested in serving the cooperative on the board, please contact memberservices@twinvalleyelectric.com or call our office at 866-784-5500 for information.



An average of **346,800** home fires occur every year, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Electrical issues (either failure or malfunction) account for 46,700 of those fires.

Common Causes

Incorrectly installed wiring; overloaded circuits or extension cords; defective or improper plugs, switches or outlets; and misuse or poor maintenance of lighting are common causes.

Warning Signs

Signs that indicate possible wiring or electrical problems include flickering or dimming lights; discolored cords, outlets or switch plates; switches or outlets that are hot to the touch or emit an odor; and recurring blown fuses and tripped circuit breakers.

Prevention

Hire a qualified electrician to examine and repair electrical issues in your home. Do not take on do-it-yourself electrical projects if you are not qualified.

Heating Equipment Leading Cause of Fires

Heating equipment, such as space heaters, kerosene heaters, fireplaces and wood-burning stoves, is a leading cause of fires in U.S. homes, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The term “homes” includes one- and two-family homes (including manufactured homes), apartments, townhouses and other multi-family dwellings.

During a recent four-year period, local fire departments responded to an estimated average of 48,530 fires involving heating equipment each year. The fires resulted in 500 civilian (non-first responder) deaths, 1,350 civilian injuries and \$1.1 billion in direct property damage, according to NFPA’s Home Heating Fires report published in 2021.

In Addition:

- ▶ Heating equipment caused one in seven home fires and 19% of home fire deaths.
 - ▶ Most home heating fire deaths (81%) included stationary or portable space heaters.
 - ▶ More than half of the home heating fire deaths were caused by placing heating equipment too close to things that can burn, such as furniture, clothing, mattresses or bedding.
 - ▶ Nearly half (48%) of all home heating fires occurred in the time frame of December, January and February.
 - ▶ Failure to clean equipment, such as chimney flues, accounted for a quarter of all heating equipment fires.
- In addition, approximately two in five home heating equipment fires involved

items that ran on what is considered solid fuel, such as wood-burning or pellet stoves or wood-burning fireplaces. However, electric-powered heating devices were responsible for the largest share of losses, accounting for more than half of the fatalities, three in five injuries and two-fifths of the property damage.

Follow These Safety Tips to Use Space Heaters Safely:

- ▶ Read all instructions and use space heaters only as recommended.
 - ▶ Do not leave space heaters unattended.
 - ▶ Plug them directly into an outlet; most power strips and extension cords are not equipped to handle the energy spikes caused by space heaters cycling on and off.
 - ▶ Unplug any other items from the outlet you are using and try to use a dedicated circuit to avoid overload.
 - ▶ Keep children and pets away from space heaters.
 - ▶ Turn the heaters off before you leave the room or go to sleep.
 - ▶ Do not use heaters that are in disrepair or have frayed cords or damaged plugs.
 - ▶ Place them on flat, level surfaces and never on furniture, counters or carpet, which can overheat.
 - ▶ Unplug and put space heaters away (out of the reach of children) when not in use.
- Use space heaters with care. For additional safety tips, visit SafeElectricity.org.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Did you know insulating your electric water heater could reduce standby heat loss by 25% to 45%? This could save you 7% to 16% on annual water heating costs.

Insulating your electric water heater is an easy, inexpensive project that can improve energy efficiency and save you money each month. The Department of Energy rates this project level as medium difficulty, meaning most homeowners can tackle this project on their own.

SOURCE: WWW.ENERGY.GOV



Be Proactive in Preventing Electrical Fires

Take steps to help prevent electrical fires by identifying possible issues before they occur.

When assessing your home, the first step is to hire a qualified electrician to check all wiring to ensure it is up to code and that the electrical system can handle the demands of your electronics, appliances, lights and other electrical needs. Beyond that, watch for possible issues as they arise.

Symptoms of issues include flickering lights, discolored outlets and switch plates, damaged cords, frequently tripped circuit breakers or blown fuses.

Check These Electrically Related Items in Your Home:

1 ELECTRICAL OUTLETS: Check for loose-fitting plugs and loose wall receptacles. Replace missing or broken wall plates. If you have young children, install tamper-resistant outlets if your home does not have them. Avoid overloading outlets with adapters and too many appliance plugs.

2 GROUND FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTERS (GFCIS): Make sure GFCIs are installed in your kitchen, bathrooms, laundry room, workshop, basement, garage and outdoor outlets. GFCIs help protect against electrical shock. Use the test and reset buttons monthly to ensure they are working properly.

3 CORDS: Check cords to confirm they are not frayed or cracked. Do not place cords under rugs, tightly wrap them around an object or locate them in high traffic areas. Do not nail or staple cords to walls, floors or other objects.

4 EXTENSION CORDS: These are not intended to be permanent solutions, so use them temporarily. If you

find that you need more electrical outlets, consult your electrician.

5 LIGHTBULBS: Verify that your lightbulbs are the intended wattage for the lamp or fixture they are in.

6 APPLIANCES/ELECTRONICS: If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker or gives you an electrical shock, it is time to discard it and replace it with a new version. Use surge protectors to protect expensive electronics. Make sure your appliances and electronics are placed in dry locations.

7 CIRCUIT BREAKERS/FUSES: Check that circuit breakers are working properly. Fuses should be properly rated for the circuits they protect.

8 ELECTRICAL WIRING: If an outlet is not working, it may be an indicator of unsafe wiring. Also, check for loose wires and lighting fixtures. Listen for popping or sizzling sounds behind walls. If light switches are hot to the touch or lights spark and flicker, immediately shut them off at the circuit breaker and contact a qualified electrician to make repairs.

9 ARC FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTERS (AFCIS): AFCIs, which monitor the flow of electricity throughout your home, should be properly installed. If an AFCI detects any abnormality, it shuts off the system to prevent a fire. Upon inspection, an electrician can assess whether your home is properly protected.

10 SERVICE CAPACITY: If fuses blow or trip frequently, you may need to increase the capacity of your electrical service or add new branch circuits. Contact a qualified electrician.

For more information on electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org).



Home Electrical Fires

Fire departments respond to an average of 46,700 home fires each year caused by electrical failure or malfunction.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), over a recent 4-year period:

30% happened in cold weather months (Nov. – Feb.)

Fires caused an estimated average of:

- ▶ 390 deaths
- ▶ 1070 injuries



Wiring and related equipment were involved in the greatest number of home electrical fires.

Lighting, a lamp or a bulb, was involved in the second largest number of fires.



WARNING SIGNS

of electrical issues:



Damaged cords and flickering lights

Discolored outlets and switch plates



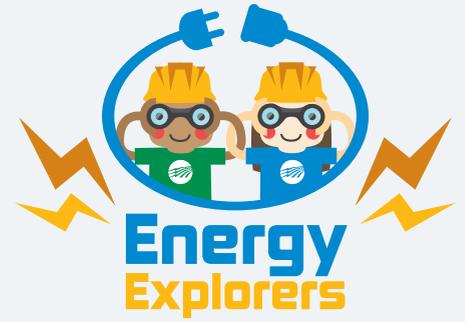
Frequently tripped circuit breakers or blown fuses

Hire a licensed contractor to ensure your home's wiring is installed to code and functioning properly.

SOURCE: NFPA'S ELECTRICAL FIRES REPORT, 2022

PLEDGE TO SAVE ENERGY

It's a new year, and that means it's time to think about how you'll make a positive impact in 2023! You can help the planet by saving energy at home and at school. Take the pledge to save energy this year by completing the form below. Post it on your refrigerator or at school to remind others about easy ways to save energy and costs while helping our environment.



I Pledge to Save Energy



Name: _____

I pledge to do my part to save energy and help our planet.

Every day, I'll do the following to save energy at home and/or at school.

My Daily Energy-Saving Plan:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Need some ideas to help you get started?

Here are a few easy ways you can save energy every day.

- ▶ Turn off all lights when you leave a room.
- ▶ Unplug phone and other device chargers when they're not being used.
- ▶ Turn off running water while brushing your teeth.
- ▶ Remind family members to wash clothes in cold water.
- ▶ Turn off ceiling fans when you leave a room.