



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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**TWIN VALLEY
ELECTRIC CO-OP**

NEWS

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FROM THE MANAGER

The Power of Preparation



Angie Erickson

In honor of National Preparedness Month in September, I want to remind community members about the power of preparation. While you don't have to

achieve a "doomsday prepper" level of preparedness, there are several practical steps you can take to keep you and your family safe.

Even at a modest level, preparation can help reduce stress, anxiety and lessen the impact of an emergency event. We recommend starting with the basics.

Here are general guidelines recommended by the Federal Emergency Management Agency:

- ▶ Assemble a grab-and-go disaster kit. Include items like nonperishable food, water (one gallon per person, per day), diapers, batteries, flashlights, prescription medications, first-aid kit, battery-powered radio and phone chargers.
- ▶ Develop a plan for communicating with family and friends (i.e., via text, social media, third party, etc.).
- ▶ Have some extra cash available; during a power outage, electronic card readers and ATMs may not work.

- ▶ Store important documents (birth certificates, property deed, etc.) in safe place away from home (for example, a bank safe deposit box).
- ▶ Keep neighbors and coworkers apprised of your emergency plans.
- ▶ Fill your car with gas.
- ▶ Organize your supplies so they are together in an easily accessible location that family members know about.

Caring for Vulnerable Family Members

If you have older family members or those with special needs, make sure they have enough medication and supplies for a few days. If they don't live with you, arrange for a neighbor to check in on them. If a severe weather event is expected, consider having your relative stay with you if feasible, otherwise call them daily. If you have an infant or young children, make certain you have ample formula, diapers, medication and other supplies on hand to weather an outage lasting several days or more.

Keeping Four-Legged Family Members Safe

For families with pets, having a plan in place in the event of a prolonged outage or an emergency will help reduce

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What to do before using a PORTABLE GENERATOR



Prepare

Install battery operated carbon monoxide (CO) alarms throughout your home; ensure they are working properly.

Position

Place a portable generator at least 20 feet from windows and doors; do not use one in a garage or carport.



Read

Carefully review and then follow all manufacturer's instructions.

Protect

If it is wet outside, keep it dry by placing it on a tarp. Position it under a portable canopy (not a carport).



Refuel Safely

Turn off your portable generator and let it cool down before refueling.

Inspect and Maintain

Inspect a portable generator before each use and make sure it is properly maintained.



Using a portable generator can be useful during an outage; however, use one correctly to prevent CO poisoning and to stay safe.

Fuel Your Generator Knowledge

The power goes out and suddenly, you're left in the dark. There's not much you can do except wait for the electric co-op linemen to restore power. Meanwhile, you grab your portable generator to use it as backup power. Before starting it up, there are important lifesaving safety steps you should know. It is best to familiarize yourself with how to use a generator properly before needing one.

Before using a portable generator, be sure to:

- ▶ Check carbon monoxide (CO) detectors. Protect yourself and those you love by making sure there are properly working battery-operated CO testers in your home along with fresh batteries.
- ▶ Read the instructions. Many people are tempted to skip this step, but incorrectly using a generator can cause CO poisoning, which is often deadly. These are instructions you should take the time to read.
- ▶ Know how to use one properly. Operate generators at least 20 feet from doors and windows and never use one in any type of enclosed structure, such as a garage, shed or tent. If your RV has a generator, operate it safely to avoid CO poisoning.
- ▶ Keep it dry. If it is wet outside, place the portable generator on a tarp. If it is raining or snowing, position it under a portable canopy (but not under a carport).
- ▶ Keep utility workers and others safe. Never plug a portable generator into a wall outlet. Never use a permanent generator without throwing the transfer switch. Doing either of these things can cause backfeed into the power grid and endanger the lives of lineworkers attempting to restore power.
- ▶ Make sure the transfer switch is endorsed by a reputable testing laboratory, such as UL, and that the installation meets all applicable electrical codes.
- ▶ Plug items directly into a portable generator using heavy-duty extension cords in good working condition and of the correct gauge. The lower the gauge number and the thicker the cord, the more electricity it can safely carry; refer to the owner's manual for specifics. Do not plug one extension cord into another.
- ▶ Let the generator cool down before refueling. Store fuel safely in a well-ventilated area separate from the house. The location should have no electrical equipment, open flames or other sources of ignition present. The location should be protected from the heat of the summer sun to keep evaporation to a minimum.
- ▶ Keep the generator well maintained and have it inspected regularly. To learn more about safe generator use and electrical safety in general, visit SafeElectricity.org.

The Power of Preparation

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worry and stress especially during an emergency.

- ▶ Bring pets indoors at the first sign of a storm or other emergency. Pets can become disoriented and frightened during severe weather and may wander off during an emergency.
- ▶ Microchip your pet and ensure the contact information is up to date.

- ▶ Store pet medical records on a USB drive or in an easy-to-remember location.
- ▶ Create an emergency kit for pets (include shelf-safe food, bottled water, medications and other supplies). At Twin Valley Electric, we care about your safety. Planning for an emergency today can give you more confidence to deal with severe weather and potential outages in the future.

Electricity Complacency

Stay Safe on Your Ranch or Farm

Farmers and ranchers must take countless precautions to stay safe. Unfortunately, electrical hazards can be overlooked since electricity cannot be seen or heard and overhead power lines often fade into the rural landscape.

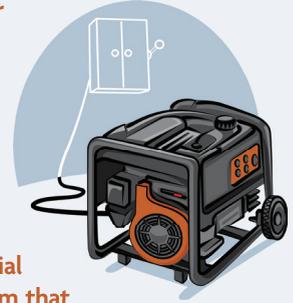
Here are some electrical safety tips to implement on your farm or ranch:

- ▶ Look for exposed energized parts and unguarded electrical equipment that could become energized unexpectedly.
- ▶ Be careful when operating watering tanks with electric pumps. Ensure irrigation systems are not spraying water into or near overhead power lines.
- ▶ Inspect electrical fencing regularly to ensure that everything is tight and secure and that no parts are frayed.
- ▶ Ensure your electric fence is well supported. A lack of support can cause it to sag, leading to animals escaping or electrical issues.
- ▶ Make sure electric fencing is visible by using electric fence tape, warning signs or other methods.
- ▶ Cap posts, especially metal T-posts, to prevent an animal (or human) from becoming impaled.
- ▶ Be aware of overhead power lines when moving hay bales.
- ▶ Do not store hay bales under power lines.
- ▶ Be aware that tarps covering hay can come loose and blow in heavy winds, sometimes causing an outage if the tarp gets too close or contacts a power line.
- ▶ When using a generator and double throw switch, make sure they are in good working order and up to code.
- ▶ Check electrical center pivot equipment before and after use to ensure it is grounded, that the housing is protected, and the wiring is sound. This protects livestock and people.
- ▶ Regularly inspect irrigation equipment. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for inspection and maintenance.
- ▶ Always turn off the power before working on an irrigation system.
- ▶ After a storm, make sure the irrigation system is still grounded and has not been affected by lightning.
- ▶ Position irrigation pipes at least 15 feet away from power lines; store unused pipes away from power lines.
- ▶ Always be aware of overhead power line locations and use a spotter when working close to lines or poles.
- ▶ Follow safe digging procedures; call 811 to have underground utilities marked before breaking ground.

To learn more about electrical safety on the ranch or farm or in general, visit SafeElectricity.org.

WHAT IS A GENERATOR TRANSFER SWITCH?

A transfer or throw switch, also called a double throw switch, is an essential mechanism that shuts off power to the grid before backup power is used.



WHAT DOES A TRANSFER SWITCH DO?

- ▶ Changes or transfers the power load from one source to another.
- ▶ Connects generators rated at 5,000 watts or more to your home's main circuits to provide backup power during an outage.
- ▶ Prevents power from backfeeding into the power grid and endangering utility workers and others.

PERMANENT GENERATORS

- ▶ Have an internal switch that automatically transfers the source of power.
- ▶ Automatically turn on when the power goes out.
- ▶ Must be installed to code by licensed contractors and usually placed near the electric and gas meters.
- ▶ Not all permanently installed generators are standby versions. Some have manual transfer switches. Make sure your permanent generator and switch are installed to code and working properly.

PORTABLE GENERATORS

- ▶ Can be connected to your home's electrical service panel that is properly wired through a transfer switch.
- ▶ Never plug it into a wall outlet as this can cause backfeed.

ALWAYS USE A GENERATOR SAFELY.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Our faucets and appliances use a lot of hot water, which accounts for a large portion of home energy bills. You can lower your water heating costs by using less hot water in your home.

To save energy (and money!) used for water heating, repair any leaky faucets, install low-flow fixtures and insulate accessible hot water lines. When it's time to purchase a new washing machine or dishwasher, look for models that are Energy Star®-certified.

SOURCE: WWW.ENERGY.GOV



CO-OPS



VOTE

A PROGRAM OF AMERICA'S
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

WWW.VOTE.COOP



Make Your Voice Count

Co-ops across the nation are dedicated to making our voices heard at the polls. Collectively we can make a difference.

**National Voter
Registration Day
is Sept. 20, 2022**

5 Easy Ways to Exercise Your Civic Duty

America's electric cooperatives, including Twin Valley Electric, understand the value of building relationships with elected officials at all levels of government. There are many important policy issues that directly impact electric utilities and ultimately, you, the consumer-members we proudly serve. Strengthening our relationships with elected leaders positions us to advocate for our local community.

National Voter Registration Day is Sept. 20, and midterm elections are right around the corner. If you're looking to get involved or simply make sure you're ready to vote, here are five easy ways you can exercise your civic duty.

- 1 DON'T ASSUME YOUR VOTER REGISTRATION STATUS IS UP TO DATE.** Visit www.vote.coop, then click "Election Resources" to verify your status.
- 2 GET INFORMED.** In addition to ensuring your registration is up to date, learning about local policy issues and candidates is one of the best ways you can prepare to vote.
- 3 GET ACTIVE ON SOCIAL MEDIA.** Follow @coopsvote on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and let others know you're a #coopvoter and #VoteReady; encourage your friends and family to do the same.
- 4 HELP OTHERS PREPARE TO VOTE.** Work a National Voter Registration Day event (visit www.nationalvoterregistrationday.org/events), volunteer to be a poll worker during midterm elections or offer to drive others to their polling places.
- 5 VOTE!** It's the easiest — and most important — way you can exercise your civic duty.

Voting is a form of personal empowerment that gives you the opportunity to voice your opinion on the issues that matter most to you. Make a plan to vote and help others in our community get #VoteReady.

We encourage everyone, regardless of political beliefs, to vote, stand up for our local community and make a collective impact.

2022 Election Dates | *Your Vote is Your Voice*

September 20

National Voter Registration Day

October 18

Deadline to register to vote for general election

October 19

First day advance by mail ballots are mailed and advance in-person voting may begin

November 1

Deadline for voters to apply for advance mail ballot

November 8

General election

