



# TWIN VALLEY ELECTRIC CO-OP NEWS

## TWIN VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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Monday-Friday  
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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## How Severe Winter Weather Impacts Reliability

When outdoor temperatures drop, our electricity use increases. We're doing more activities inside, and our heating systems are running longer and more often to counteract colder outdoor temperatures. Factor in that we all tend to use electricity at the same times — in the morning and early evenings — and that equals a lot of strain on our electric grid.

At Twin Valley Electric we work closely with our local generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative in resource and infrastructure planning to ensure you have the power you need whenever you flip a switch, but the electric grid is much larger than your local co-op and G&T.

In winter months, when even more electricity is being used simultaneously across the country, it is possible for electricity demand to exceed supply,

especially if an unexpected event like a sudden snow or ice storm or equipment malfunction occurs. If this happens, which is rare, the grid operator for our region of the country may call for rolling power outages to relieve pressure on the grid, and Twin Valley Electric will inform you about the situation.

Twin Valley Electric and our G&T take proactive steps to create a resilient portion of the grid and ensure electric reliability in extreme weather, including regular system maintenance, grid modernization efforts and disaster response planning; but it takes everyone to keep the grid reliable.

To help keep the heat on for you, your family and neighbors, here are a few things you can do to relieve pressure on the grid (and save a little money along the way):


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### ENERGY EFFICIENCY

## Tip of the Month

Area rugs are an easy, cost-effective solution to cold floors. They can enhance the aesthetic of your home and keep you cozier. Adding area rugs to hard-surface flooring can add warmth to any room and keep your feet comfy on cold winter days. Choose rugs made from wool or other natural fibers and plush or high-pile textures for the most insulation. Place rugs in areas where you need additional warmth, like the foot of a bed or under a coffee table.

SOURCE: NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION



## BEST BETS FOR

# Winter Savings

Energy consumption spikes during winter as we spend more time indoors and heating systems work overtime. You can help reduce demand and strain on the electric grid and lower your energy bills by conserving during peak energy times.

## UNPLUG WHEN POSSIBLE

Turn off unnecessary lights and electronics when you aren't using them.



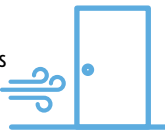
## LOWER THE THERMOSTAT

Home heating accounts for a large portion of energy consumption. Adjust your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting (68 degrees or lower).



## ELIMINATE DRAFTS AND AIR LEAKS

Seal air leaks and drafts around windows and exterior doors.



## USE APPLIANCES WHEN ENERGY DEMAND IS LOWER

Run large appliances like clothes washers, dryers and dishwashers early in the morning or before going to bed.



## MAINTAIN HEATING EQUIPMENT

Maintain your heating system by replacing dirty, clogged filters and scheduling an annual inspection for necessary maintenance.



# Horses Gallop and so Can Power Lines

## How can galloping lines impact power transmission and distribution?

Galloping power lines are typically caused when ice and high winds occur at the same time. Freezing rain creates icicles and odd-shaped ice formations on power lines and conductors. The ice buildup changes how wind and air impact the now misshapen, ice-covered line. This change in airflow can cause the power line to begin bouncing.

They can bounce and buck enough to hit another line, damage themselves enough to cause a power outage or even fall to the ground.

A power company can't prevent galloping lines since the wild motion is caused by Mother Nature. However, some power lines have special mechanisms, such as twisted wire or round or angular pieces of metal, attached to the line to minimize the motion. While they can help, sometimes they are no match for severe ice and whipping wind.

Aside from ice storms, year-round storms can cause damaging winds, which can knock down power lines and blow trees and limbs onto power lines. Keep the following safety tips in mind:

- ▶ When you see power lines on the ground, stay away, warn others to stay away and contact the electric utility or call 911. Lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live.
- ▶ Any utility wire, including telephone or cable lines that are sagging or

down, could be in contact with an energized power line, also making it dangerous. Do not try to guess the types of lines — stay away from all lines.

- ▶ Be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide electrical hazards. Downed power lines can energize objects around them, such as chain-link fences and metal culverts.
  - ▶ Keep in mind that a deenergized line could become energized during power restoration efforts or improper use of generators.
  - ▶ Never drive over a downed line. It could start a chain reaction and cause additional poles or other equipment to collapse.
  - ▶ If you are in a car that has contacted or is near a downed power line, stay in your vehicle. Wait until the utility crew has arrived and deenergized the line. Warn others not to approach the car.
  - ▶ Only exit a car or cab near or on downed lines if there is a fire. If this happens, cross your arms over your chest and make a solid jump out and away from the car with both feet together. Then hop away at least 50 feet or more while continuing to keep both feet together.
- For more electrical safety information, visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).

## SAFETY TIP

Did you know mylar balloons can damage the power grid and cause power outages? When balloons are released outside, they eventually fall back to earth and their remnants can cause harm to wildlife. To stay safe, consider alternatives to balloon releases and enjoy balloons indoors.



SOURCE: [WWW.SAFELECTRICITY.COM](http://WWW.SAFELECTRICITY.COM)

# How Severe Winter Weather Impacts Reliability

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- ▶ Select the lowest comfortable thermostat setting and turn it down several degrees whenever possible. Your heating system must run longer to make up the difference between the thermostat temperature and the outdoor temperature.
  - ▶ **PRO TIP:** Seal air leaks around windows and exterior doors with caulk and weatherstripping. Air leaks and drafts force your heating system to work harder than necessary.
- ▶ Stagger your use of major appliances such as dishwashers, ovens and dryers.
  - ▶ **PRO TIP:** Start the dishwasher before you go to bed and use smaller countertop appliances like slow cookers and air fryers to save energy.
- ▶ Ensure that your heating system is optimized for efficiency with regular maintenance and proper insulation.
  - ▶ **PRO TIP:** Make sure your furnace filter isn't clogged and dirty. Replace it as needed. Experts recommend replacing your furnace filter at least every three months or every two months if you have pets or allergies.
- ▶ When possible, use cold water to reduce water heating costs.
  - ▶ **PRO TIP:** Setting your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees can help you save energy and reduce mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes.
- ▶ Unplug devices when not in use to eliminate unnecessary energy use. Even when turned off, electronics in standby mode consume energy.
  - ▶ **PRO TIP:** Plug devices into a power strip so you can turn them all off at once with the push of a button.

As we face the challenges posed by winter weather, understanding its impact on energy demand is crucial for maintaining a reliable power supply. By adopting energy conservation practices during periods of extreme cold, not only can you save money on your electric bills, but you can also contribute to the resilience of the power grid, keeping our local community warm and connected.

## Preventing Frost Damage to Fruit Trees This Spring

BY MADDY ROHR, K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS SERVICE

### K-State horticulture expert explains fruit tree species' sensitivity to frost

As fruit tree selection begins for the spring, Kansas State University horticulture expert Ward Upham said certain species will be more sensitive to frost and, thus, decreased fruit production.

"Spring in Kansas is often unsettled with apricot and peach tree flowers being very vulnerable to late frosts that can kill fruit buds," Upham said. "Of course, the tree itself will be fine, but there will be none to little fruit for that year."

Upham said the closer a tree is to blooming the more sensitive it is, but apricot and peach trees are by far the most vulnerable.

"Apricots are more likely to have frost kill flowers than peaches because they bloom a bit earlier. Though there are late-blooming apricot varieties, the differences between full bloom on early and late-blooming varieties appears to be slight," Upham said.

In addition to bloom time, fruit bud hardiness is important in peach tree varieties.

"In this case, fruit bud hardiness refers to hardiness to

late frosts rather than the ability to survive extreme low temperatures during the winter," Upham said.

Location is also a factor in preventing frost damage to fruit trees. Upham recommends planting on a hill that allows cold air to drain to lower elevations, or a location in town that will be more likely to have a warmer micro-climate than an exposed location.

"Some gardeners will add a heat source under a tree during cold nights if they are close to a building," Upham said. "Heat lamps and charcoal briquettes are sometimes used but safety should be the first consideration."

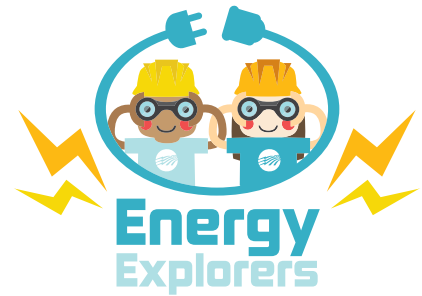
Upham and his colleagues in K-State's Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources produce a weekly Horticulture Newsletter with tips for maintaining home landscapes and gardens. The newsletter is available to view online or can be delivered by email each week.

Interested persons can also send their garden and yard-related questions to Upham at [wupham@ksu.edu](mailto:wupham@ksu.edu), or contact your local K-State Research and Extension office.

# WINTER Safety Word Search

Did you know most home fires happen during colder months? Play it safe this winter season.

Read the safety tips below, then find and circle the **BOLD BLUE** words in the puzzle.



A	P	I	R	P	A	J	G	F	W	D	C	Q	T	W
U	L	B	S	G	W	N	N	P	T	S	A	T	A	T
R	L	A	Y	P	J	I	U	Q	P	Q	N	G	E	O
C	T	W	R	Y	J	D	X	A	R	X	D	B	L	Z
J	F	T	P	M	K	G	C	I	B	T	L	T	C	F
X	B	K	Y	Z	S	E	M	B	Q	G	E	B	D	B
G	B	W	B	Z	H	K	T	Z	H	J	H	R	M	X
C	V	X	J	E	B	X	S	X	B	Q	C	K	V	A
V	I	M	A	B	O	K	A	T	C	S	I	K	F	E
X	Y	T	Q	Y	K	J	S	F	N	Q	V	T	J	W
L	E	V	J	A	N	V	U	W	C	B	A	P	A	W
R	T	R	E	L	E	C	T	R	O	N	I	C	S	O
W	Z	B	K	R	Y	X	S	B	V	A	Q	O	U	E
S	D	R	O	C	N	O	I	S	N	E	T	X	E	P
I	F	J	R	W	K	J	B	Q	P	U	B	D	T	Z



- ▶ Never overload electrical outlets with too many **ELECTRONICS**.
- ▶ Test smoke and carbon monoxide **ALARMS** every month.
- ▶ Never leave a **CANDLE** burning in an empty room.
- ▶ Keep flammable items at least 3 feet away from a **SPACE HEATER**.
- ▶ **EXTENSION CORDS** should only be used temporarily. Damaged or frayed cords should be thrown away.