



## TWIN VALLEY ELECTRIC CO-OP

# NEWS

### TWIN VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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#### STAFF

**Angie Erickson**  
CEO

#### OFFICE HOURS

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

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### FROM THE CEO

## Co-ops Power Communities With Purpose

Communities come in all shapes and sizes. Some are based on geographical proximity, some are based on shared interests or hobbies, and some communities can even be found in virtual spaces like social media groups. Regardless of where or how they are formed, communities can bring people together and create a sense of belonging.

Twin Valley Electric is deeply committed to our consumer-members, and we're glad you are part of the electric cooperative community.

This month, more than 30,000 cooperatives across the U.S. are celebrating National Co-op Month. It's a time to reflect on all the aspects that set cooperatives apart from other types of businesses, but more importantly, it's a time to celebrate the power of co-op membership.

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit utilities that are built by the

communities they serve. For Twin Valley, our mission has always been to provide you with safe, reliable power. We care about your quality of life, and because we are locally operated, we're uniquely suited to meet our members' evolving energy needs.

Beyond the business of electricity, our employees and directors are equally invested in our local community. Why? Because we live here, too. That's why we work hard to support local economic development projects, youth programs and scholarships, charitable giving initiatives and additional programs that make our community a better place to call home.

All co-ops, including Twin Valley, are guided by seven cooperative principles that embody the values and spirit of the cooperative movement.



Angie Erickson

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*October is National*

# CO-OP MONTH

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit, community-led utilities. Because we are a co-op, we can adapt to our local members' needs, providing the programs and services you care about most.

*That's the power of co-op membership.*

# U Drive. U Text. U Pay.

**DON'T DRIVE DISTRACTED.**



For your safety and the safety of roadside crews, other drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists, do not drive distracted. Put all your attention on driving, and the rest can wait.

## DISTRACTED DRIVING CRASH STATISTICS ON U.S. ROADS:

- ▶ Nine people die each day in crashes that involve a distracted driver.
- ▶ Distracted driving claimed 3,522 lives in 2021.
- ▶ Texting diverts attention from driving for approximately 5 seconds. At 55 mph, that's enough time to travel the length of a football field.
- ▶ Many states have laws against texting, talking on the phone and other distractions while driving.

## THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF DRIVING DISTRACTIONS:

- ▶ **VISUAL** — when you take your eyes off the road.
- ▶ **MANUAL** — when you take your hands off the wheel.
- ▶ **COGNITIVE** — when you take your mind off driving.

Distracted driving is preventable. Set up apps before you get behind the wheel to help you avoid using your cellphone.

SOURCES: NHTSA, CDC, WWW.SAFELECTRICITY.ORG

# Teen Driver Safety

Parenting teens is challenging. While some battles aren't worth fighting, protecting your teen behind the wheel is. This year, take part in National Teen Driver Safety Week between Oct. 20-26, and talk to your teen about safe driving.

Although no one wants to think about teens being in car accidents, it happens. Car accidents are a leading cause of death for teens in the U.S., with the highest risk in the first year of driving. Their inexperience makes them more susceptible to crashes. Common hazards include additional passengers, speeding, drowsy driving and using phones.

Distracted driving is a major issue, with 3,308 people killed in distracted-affected crashes in 2022, including 2,613 teens, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation. That's approximately seven teens per day.

Teen drivers often lack the skills and experience needed to avoid fatal crashes, and distractions such as texting can be particularly dangerous. For example, reading a text at 55 mph is like driving the length of a football field with your eyes closed. For this reason, many states have laws against texting, talking on the phone and engaging in other distractions while driving.

## THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF DRIVING DISTRACTIONS TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR TEEN:

- ▶ **VISUAL**, when you take your eyes off the road.
- ▶ **MANUAL**, when you take your hands off the wheel.
- ▶ **COGNITIVE**, when you take your mind off driving.

## TO PREVENT DISTRACTED DRIVING, TEACH YOUR TEENS (AND EMULATE) THESE TIPS:

- ▶ Do not text while driving.
- ▶ Block texts and keep your phone out of sight.
- ▶ Avoid eating while driving.
- ▶ Use playlists instead of searching for music.
- ▶ Set up navigation before driving or have a passenger navigate.

Teen drivers report pressure from families and friends to use phones while driving. Many drivers continue to use phones even when they are aware of the crash risk. Technology can help avoid cell phone use while driving. Use built-in features on your smartphone or cell phone blocking apps to prevent distractions. For the greatest safety benefit, change your phone settings to block all calls and text messages — including hands-free communications.

## STAY SAFE AROUND POWER LINES

Ensure your teen knows what to do if they encounter downed power lines: remain in the vehicle, call 911, and stay at least 50 feet away from the scene if they witness an accident.

Make sure they realize that downed lines or other damaged utility equipment can look lifeless and harmless yet still be energized. They do not have to be sparking, moving or sizzling (like you often see in movies) to be energized.

For more safety tips, visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org) and consider downloading a Parent-Teen Driving Agreement from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

## SAFETY TIP

In the U.S., nine people are killed each day in crashes involving a distracted driver. When you drive, just drive. Distracted driving not only puts you and other drivers at risk, but it also endangers roadside crews, bikers and pedestrians.



SOURCE: WWW.SAFELECTRICITY.COM

# Co-ops Power Communities With Purpose *Continued from page 12A* ▶

These seven principles are a framework to help all co-ops navigate challenges and opportunities while remaining true to our purpose:

**1 OPEN AND VOLUNTARY MEMBERSHIP:** Co-op membership is open to anyone who can use the co-op's services.

**2 DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL:** Members make decisions that shape the cooperative. Why? Because co-ops are created by the members, for the members.

**3 MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION:** Members contribute money to the co-op to make sure it runs smoothly now and in the future. At Twin Valley, this happens through paying your energy bills.

**4 AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE:** Co-ops are independent and can operate on their own, which ultimately benefits the members.

**5 EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION:** Co-ops continuously focus on education to ensure employees

and the board of trustees have the training and information they need to make the co-op successful. At Twin Valley, we also provide electric safety demonstrations for local students and organizations. This helps spread the safety message and ensure safety around the co-op's electric infrastructure.

**6 COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES:** Co-ops share with and learn from other cooperatives. We help each other out in times of need because we want other co-ops to thrive.

**7 CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY:** All cooperatives work for the greater good of the local communities they serve. Co-ops give back to their communities to help them thrive and grow.

This October, as we celebrate National Co-op Month and the power of membership, we hope you will recognize the many aspects that set electric cooperatives apart. Our mission is reliable power. Our purpose is people — the local communities we're proud to serve.

## Cybersecurity Tips for a Safer Digital World

Did you know the average household with internet access owns about 17 connected devices? That figure covers a wide range of electronics, including smart phones, computers, streaming devices, smart speakers, home assistants and more. Given our increasing reliance on internet-connected technologies, the likelihood of new cyber threats is ever-present.

Twin Valley Electric is deeply committed to ensuring our local system is safe and secure. We routinely monitor and manage cyber risks, and we work together with other co-ops to share the latest advancements in cybersecurity measures that make us stronger. But you can help, too.

When we all work together to stay safe online, we lower the risk of cyber threats to our systems, online accounts and sensitive data.

October is National Cybersecurity Month, and while good cyber hygiene should be practiced year-round, we'd like to share a few cybersecurity tips to help you bolster your online safety.

▶ **LEARN HOW TO SPOT AND REPORT PHISHING ATTEMPTS.**

Phishing occurs when criminals use phony emails, direct messages or other types of digital communications that lure you to click a bad link or download a malicious attachment. If you receive a suspicious email or message that includes urgent language, offers that seem too good to be true, generic greetings, poor grammar or an unusual sender address, it could be a phishing attempt. If you spot one, report it as soon as possible — and don't forget to block the sender. (If you receive a suspicious work email, report it to the appropriate IT contact. Suspicious messages delivered to your personal email or social media accounts can also be reported.)

▶ **CREATE STRONG, UNIQUE PASSWORDS.** When it comes to passwords, remember that length trumps

complexity. Strong passwords contain at least 12 characters and include a mix of letters, numbers and symbols. Create unique passwords for each online account you manage and use phrases you can easily remember.

▶ **ENABLE MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION WHEN AVAILABLE.**

Multi-factor authentication (also known as two-factor authentication) adds an extra layer of security to your online accounts. These extra security steps can include facial recognition, fingerprint access, or one-time codes sent to your email or phone.

▶ **UPDATE SOFTWARE REGULARLY.**

Software and internet-connected devices, including personal computers, smartphones and tablets, should always be current on updates to reduce the risk of infection from ransomware and malware. When possible, configure devices to automatically update or notify you when an update is available.

Let's all do our part to stay cyber smart and create a safer digital world for all. Visit [www.staysafeonline.org](http://www.staysafeonline.org) to learn about additional cybersecurity tips.

### October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month

Let's work together to build a safer digital world. Whether at home, work or school, we can increase our online safety with the following tips:

- 🔒 Recognize and report phishing attempts.
- 🔒 Use strong, unique passwords.
- 🔒 Enable multi-factor authentication.
- 🔒 Update software regularly.





# 'Watt' to Know About Appliance Electricity Use

## Become 'watt' saavy before purchasing appliances, using generator

Determining how much electricity your appliances and home electronics use can help you understand how much money you are spending to operate them. Electricity is measured in units of power called watts, and one watt is a joule of energy used or produced per second.

The power consumption of small devices is usually measured in watts, while the power use of larger devices is measured in kilowatts (kW) (1 kW equals 1,000 watts). Knowing how much electricity an appliance uses and how much the electricity costs can help you decide whether to invest in a more energy-efficient appliance or make other cost-saving decisions, such as unplugging appliances when not in use. Becoming watt savvy is also helpful if you are considering purchasing a generator.

There are several ways to estimate how much electricity your appliances and home electronics use.

### SEE THE DATA PLATE

Appliances usually have data plates located on the back or inside the door. They tell you how many amps, watts and volts are needed to power the appliance. If your appliance does not list watts for some reason but does list the number of volts and amps, you can multiply volts times amps to get the number of necessary watts.

### REVIEW THE ENERGYGUIDE LABEL

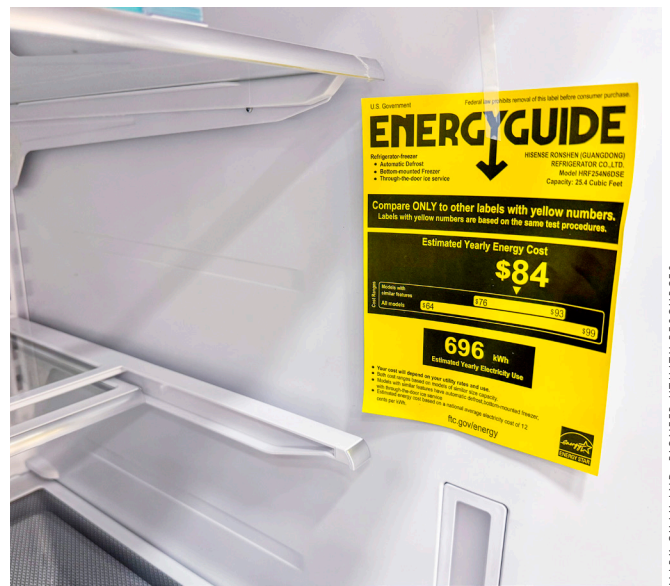
The EnergyGuide label, a yellow-colored sticker or tag found on new products, provides an estimate of the average energy consumption and cost to operate the specific model of the appliance you are considering. The FTC requires the label, and the dollar amount is the estimated yearly operating cost based on the national average cost of electricity.

### USE A MONITOR OR METER

Wattage meters are affordable instruments that are easy to use and can measure the electricity usage of any device that runs on 120 volts. To put it to work, just plug the monitor into the electrical outlet and then plug the device into the monitor. The monitor will display how many watts the device uses. If you want to know how many kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity a device uses over a length of time, just leave everything set up and read the display later. Some monitors even allow you to plug in your utility's cost per kWh rate to determine how much that specific appliance costs you over a certain length of time.

### INSTALL A WHOLE-HOUSE SYSTEM

Whole-house energy monitoring systems provide more detailed data on your home's energy use (as well as the ability to measure the energy use of 240-volt appliances). The



When shopping for appliances, look for the Energy Star logo on the energy guide to identify which products are the most efficient options.

features of these systems vary, and the cost and complexity depend on the number of circuits you want to monitor, how detailed the feedback is and the type of features available. The monitors are often installed directly into the main breaker panel of the home, and some require an electrician to install. Some monitors must be connected to your home's wireless network, with data being viewed on a computer or smartphone, while others come with a dedicated display. In addition to providing information on the energy consumption of your appliances, this type of monitoring system helps you understand where and when you use the most energy, allowing you to develop strategies to reduce your energy use and costs.

### COMPARING AN OLDER APPLIANCE TO A NEWER ONE

Now that you know how to measure the energy used by your appliances and home electronics, you can visit [www.EnergyStar.gov](http://www.EnergyStar.gov) to access information that can help you decide if you should upgrade to newer, more efficient models. Energy Star provides energy use data on specific products that have earned the Energy Star rating. You can compare this information to your current appliances' energy use to see if an upgrade is worth your while. EnergyStar.gov also provides tools that allow you to select and compare specific models to one another. Depending on the type of appliance, Energy Star-certified appliances use between 10% and 50% less energy than their standard counterparts.