



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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TWIN VALLEY ELECTRIC CO-OP

NEWS

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FROM THE CEO

Home Lighting 101

Lighting is something most of us don't think much about — until it's wrong. Maybe the living room feels too dim for reading, or the kitchen lights cast an odd yellow glow. We often grab whatever bulb or fixture looks good without considering how it will actually perform in the space. But with a little planning, you can make your home brighter, cozier and more energy efficient.

WATTS VS. LUMENS

When you're shopping for lightbulbs, it's easy to focus on watts, but watts only measure how much energy a bulb uses. When it comes to brightness, what really matters is the lumen count. Lumens measure the actual light output. For example, an 800-lumen bulb emits approximately the same amount of light as a traditional 60-watt incandescent bulb. (You've likely

replaced all incandescent bulbs with long-lasting, energy-efficient LEDs, but if not — it's time to make the switch!)

A helpful rule of thumb: Higher lumens mean brighter light, while lower watts mean less energy consumed. Remember to check wattage ratings for fixtures and only install bulbs that meet the fixture's wattage safety requirements.

COLOR TEMPERATURE AND CONSISTENCY

Lightbulbs also vary in color temperature, which ranges from warm yellow to cool white or even bluish tones. This detail often gets overlooked until you replace one bulb and notice the new light doesn't quite match the



Angie Erickson

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OFFICE HOURS

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

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Preparing for the Big Hunt

Look out for power lines

QUICK TIPS

- ▶ Never install stands or blinds on utility poles or near electrical equipment.
- ▶ Stay at least 10 feet from overhead power lines when climbing or placing a tree stand.
- ▶ Stay a minimum of 50 feet from a downed power line and call 911 to report it.
- ▶ Don't aim or shoot near power lines, poles or substations.
- ▶ Always assume power lines are live and dangerous, even if they appear inactive.

As hunting season approaches, excitement builds for time outdoors. But before you head into the woods, make sure electrical safety is part of your preparation checklist.

Power lines and utility equipment are often out of sight — and out of mind — especially in wooded or rural areas. Ignoring them can lead to serious injuries or even death.

BEFORE YOU CLIMB THAT TREE STAND, LOOK UP AND OUT

Never install a tree stand near a power line or on a utility pole. Electricity can arc — jump through the air — up to 10 feet from high-voltage lines. This means you don't even have to touch a wire to be at risk of electrocution.

Never shoot near or toward power lines, utility poles, transformers or substations. Stray bullets or pellets could damage equipment, possibly interrupting electric service. Even more concerning, they could drop a power line to the ground, causing a hazardous scenario: Those who get within 50 feet of a downed line could be shocked or electrocuted.

KEEP THESE TIPS IN MIND TO STAY SAFE AND AVOID COSTLY OR DANGEROUS INCIDENTS:

- ▶ **SCOUT THE AREA.** Before hunting, take time to scout your area during daylight. Look for power lines, poles and electrical equipment. Note their locations to avoid them later.

- ▶ **POWER SAFELY.** If you're using a portable electrical generator on your hunting trip, don't use it inside a cabin or RV, or in a confined area. Use it outside where there is plenty of ventilation.
- ▶ **AVOID AIMING TOWARD POWER LINES OR EQUIPMENT.** Never fire near or toward poles, lines, substations or transformers. A stray bullet could knock down a line, interrupt power or create a deadly hazard.
- ▶ **KEEP YOUR DISTANCE.** Always stay at least 10 feet away from overhead lines, poles and other electrical infrastructure when setting up or taking down tree stands.
- ▶ **NEVER CLIMB A UTILITY POLE.** Even if it looks like the perfect vantage point, don't do it. Poles carry high-voltage lines and climbing them can be deadly.
- ▶ **DON'T USE UTILITY POLES FOR SUPPORT.** Tree stands or blinds should never be attached to or supported by power poles or electrical equipment.

KNOW THE DANGER OF DOWNED LINES

If you come across a downed power line or damaged electrical equipment, stay at least 50 feet away, even if it doesn't appear to be live. Power lines can still carry electricity when on the ground, posing a risk of shock or electrocution. Call 911 or your utility right away to help prevent a dangerous situation.

Whether you're a seasoned hunter or heading out for the first time, staying aware of your surroundings could save your life.

SAFETY TIP

Prepare for the Hunt

- ▶ Maintain a distance of at least 10 feet from overhead lines and electrical infrastructure.
- ▶ Never climb a utility pole.
- ▶ Don't use utility poles to support tree stands or blinds.
- ▶ Avoid aiming toward power lines and equipment.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG



ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

With the holiday season approaching and more time spent in the kitchen, consider ways to save energy in the heart of your home. When possible, cook meals with smaller, energy efficient appliances, such as toaster ovens, slow cookers and air fryers. When using the range, match the size of the pan to the heating element. Keep range-top burners and reflectors clean so they reflect heat more efficiently. After your holiday meals are complete, load the dishwasher fully before starting the wash cycle. SOURCE: WWW.ENERGY.GOV



Home Lighting 101

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others. If mismatched tones drive you crazy, consider buying and installing bulbs of the same brand and wattage in a room at the same time. That way, the look stays consistent, and you won't be stuck hunting for a perfect match later.

DIMMERS AND SWITCHES

Installing dimmers instead of standard on/off switches can be a game changer. Dimmers give you more control over brightness, help save energy and create a more comfortable atmosphere. Not all bulbs are dimmable, so double-check labels before buying.

While you're thinking about switches, consider whether you have enough of them — and in the right places. A light you can only turn off from one end of a hallway quickly becomes annoying. For new installations or upgrades, it's best to hire a licensed electrician to ensure everything is wired safely and efficiently.

FIXTURES: FORM MEETS FUNCTION

Bulbs are only part of the equation — fixtures matter too. Each type serves a purpose. Ambient lighting, like sconces or glass-covered ceiling fixtures, provides general illumination. Task lighting, like pendants, desk lamps or track lighting, focuses light where you need it most.

When choosing a fixture, think beyond looks. Ask yourself: Does this light provide the right amount of brightness for the space? A beautiful chandelier might look perfect over the dining table but it leaves the rest of the room too dim.

Alternatively, an oversized fixture could flood the room with more light than you need, wasting both energy and money.

SMART LIGHTING: ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEETS CONVENIENCE

Smart lighting adds another layer of control for illuminating your home. But the real magic is convenience. With smart bulbs, you can adjust brightness, set schedules or even change colors — all from your phone or a voice assistant like Alexa or Google Assistant. Want the lights to dim automatically for movie night? Or to turn on before you get home? Smart bulbs make it easy.

Smart lighting also lets you personalize your space. You can go classic with warm white tones or experiment with colors to set the mood — anything from a soft glow for winding down to vibrant hues for a party. Remember, smart bulbs still rely on power from your wall switch, which needs to stay in the “on” position for remote controls to work. If you prefer using a physical switch, consider pairing smart bulbs with a smart light switch. Many of today's smart switches also feature motion detectors, adding an extra level of efficiency and convenience.

Good lighting doesn't just make your home look better — it makes it feel better too. With a little planning, you can create spaces that are welcoming, functional and energy efficient. Whether you stick to traditional bulbs and fixtures or explore the flexibility of smart lighting, thoughtful choices today will brighten your home for years to come.

HOME LIGHTING GUIDE						
SOURCES: HOME DEPOT, ALCON LIGHTING						
						
	LIVING ROOM	KITCHEN	DINING ROOM	BEDROOM	BATHROOM	PORCH/HOME ENTRY
RECOMMENDED LUMENS	15-30 per sq. ft. 150 sq. ft. room 2,250-4,500 LUMENS	30-40 per sq. ft. 100 sq. ft. room 3,000-4,000 LUMENS	10-20 per sq. ft. 100 sq. ft. room 1,000-2,000 LUMENS	10-20 per sq. ft. 120 sq. ft. room 1,200-2,400 LUMENS	50-80 per sq. ft. 60 sq. ft. room 3,000-4,000 LUMENS	100-200 per sq. ft. 100 sq. ft. entry 10,000-20,800 LUMENS
FIXTURE TYPES	Ceiling fixtures, can lighting, lamps/ accent lighting	Recessed ceiling lights or flush mounts	Pendant or chandelier fixture	Ceiling fixtures or recessed lighting	Over-vanity fixtures and/or recessed lighting	Wall lanterns, ceiling mount and/or floodlights
TIPS	Use smart bulbs to adjust color temp and control remotely.	Smart switches control zones (dining vs. prep), while undercabinet motion lights provide late-night illumination.	Smart, dimmable bulbs allow various levels of brightness for ambiance.	Motion sensors are great options for nighttime use.	Cool LED bulbs provide brighter light for shaving, applying makeup, etc.	Motion-activated flood lights and/or smart outdoor bulbs are energy efficient and boost home security.

Infrastructure Costs

The past five years have been a period of exploding costs for the electric utility industry and broadband providers, escalated by soaring demand, supply chain challenges, raw materials shortages, increased labor costs and tariffs. The impact has been rapid increases in the cost of producing power, longer and more unpredictable project timelines and the need for more financing, all of which have driven electric rates up for residences, businesses and other end-users. Here's a look at what's contributing to the trend.

PERCENT INCREASE SINCE 2020:

● Infrastructure

Utility poles (wood, steel, composite)	+25-40%
Crossarms & braces (steel/wood)	+20-35%
Conductor wire (aluminum/copper)	+30-50%
Transformers	+70-100%
Grain-oriented electrical steel	+80-100%
Oil/dielectric fluids	+25-40%
Copper wiring	+50%
Concrete	+25-35%
Smart meters	+20-35%
Pad-mounted switchgear	+25-40%
Circuit breakers/reclosers	+20-35%

● Generation

Diesel gensets	+20-40%
Gas turbines	+20-30%
Solar PV systems	+25-35%
Wind turbines	+25-35%
Hydropower components	+20-30%
Battery storage	+25-40%
SCADA/EMS systems	+20-30%
Inverters	+20-30%
Relays & switchgear	+25-40%
Natural Gas	+20-120%
Coal	+30-60%
Diesel/fuel oil	+40-70%

● Build-outs

Utility construction labor	+20-40%
Freight/logistics	+30-60%

● Broadband

Fiber-optic cable	+25-40%
Splicing & telecom gear	+20-30%

● Fleets

Light trucks	+25-40%
Bucket trucks, digger derricks	+20-50%
Fuel costs (especially diesel)	+20-30%
Maintenance	+15-25%
Insurance premiums	+20%

SOURCES: BLS; ENERGYNEWS.COM; REUTERS; WOOD MACKENZIE; NREL; IEA

Turkey Fryer SAFETY

Keep holiday meals joyful
— avoid fires and injuries.

Deep-frying a turkey can be delicious, but it's also one of the riskiest ways to cook. Before you plug in or fire up a fryer, follow these safety tips:

SET UP SAFELY

- ▶ Use outdoor fryers at least 10 feet away from buildings, garages and overhangs.
- ▶ Place the fryer on a flat, sturdy surface and don't move it once it's heating.
- ▶ Never leave a fryer unattended.
- ▶ Keep children and pets at least 3 feet away.

PREVENT BURNS AND FIRES

- ▶ Wear oven mitts and use long utensils to avoid contact with hot surfaces and oil.
- ▶ Test the oil level before cooking. Fill the fryer with water and lower the turkey in to see how much liquid is needed. Dry everything completely before adding oil.
- ▶ Use a fully thawed and dry turkey — never fry a frozen one.

MONITOR TEMPERATURES

- ▶ Use a thermometer to make sure the oil is at the recommended temperature.
- ▶ Avoid overloading outlets if using an electric fryer; unplug other appliances before use.

SMART TIP:

Consider using an electric fryer or going oil-free with an air fryer for safer indoor cooking options.