



**BRIDGER
VALLEY
ELECTRIC
ASSOCIATION**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative
The power of human connections®



Bridger Valley Electric's

L I G H T L I N E S

Your Electric Cooperative Newsletter

"The Power to Bring You the Best"

September 2019

Updates

Manager's Viewpoint by Jud Redden

Hunting Season Is Here



While you prepare to get out there and hunt during Wyoming's fabulous fall season, be sure to review the "dos and don'ts" of hunter safety. BVEA means specifically the "dos and don'ts" of hunting near any power infrastructure. Be safe and please don't destroy the parts of your power system by shooting at insulators or poles or anything like that. It is you, the member/consumer who ultimately pays for that kind of damage.

**You can help prevent accidents. Share important safety information with those you love:
<http://SafeElectricity.org>
Check it out!**

Dogs are an Increasing Threat To Line Crews

Our crews are increasingly confronted with dangerous situations when they are faced with dogs that would like to interfere with what they are doing. Some dogs are playful and want to steal our gloves but some dogs are attempting to keep us off their territory and will attack our crews to accomplish their design.

BVEA distribution lines cross all of your properties to get to your house or to your neighbor's house. We need to access these facilities to repair outages, to change/read meters, to upgrade equipment, to locate lines for excavation, and a host of other items. We make efforts to contact the homeowner as much as possible before we enter private property. However, sometimes that is not possible.



When an outage occurs, our crews work hard to find the problem and repair whatever is broken quickly and safely. When your power is out you are expecting crews to be on your property seeking to make the needed repairs. However, sometimes the neighbor's power is out and we need to access your property to find the cause. This is usually when problems arise. We knock on your door and no one is home or it is the middle of the night and you look out to see crew members behind your house splicing a power line. We recognize that you want to protect your property and family but we hope you recognize our need to be able to access our equipment on your property. When we are confronted with dogs intent on keeping us out of the yard, it causes problems for both of us.

We need to work together to find solutions to this situation. If you have suggestions please give me a call. The coop model only works when we watch out for each other and resolve issues with a community perspective rather than an individual perspective. Please make sure your animals don't interfere with BVEA crews trying to keep the lights on for everyone.

From the Board Room:

The board met on August 6, 2019 and traveled to the Deserado Mine at Rangely, Colorado.



Deserado is the mine that supplies coal to the Deseret power plant near Vernal where BVEA gets much of its energy requirements. The board toured the mine and saw the safety improvements the mine has made. They were able to see the long wall miner in action and witnessed the problems the mine is having with mud in the coal seam.

They also toured the prep plant on the surface at the mine portal. The prep plant washes the mud and ash out of the coal before it is shipped to Deseret. Cleaner coal helps the Deseret plant meet stringent emissions controls and reduces maintenance costs as well. Understanding the power production cycle from the mine to the plant helps the board make long term plans for BVEA's energy needs.

Treating Electrical Shocks and Burns

In most situations, there are safeguards to keep us isolated from the dangers of electricity, like high-voltage power lines high on poles or buried underground, insulated wires on tools and appliances, and ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) on outlets in locations where water and electricity might come together. However, sometimes through accidents, equipment failure, or poor decision making, our bodies come into contact with electricity with tragic results.

If someone has received an electric shock, there are not always obvious injuries. Some of the symptoms to look for include: changes in alertness; headache; problems with vision, swallowing or hearing; irregular heartbeat; muscle spasm and pain; numbness or tingling; and breathing problems.

Electrical burns are different than burns from heat or fire. Unlike typical burns, electrical current passing through a body can cause serious damage below the surface of the skin. Anyone who is involved in an electrical accident should be seen by a doctor to make sure there are not internal injuries.

If you encounter an accident situation in which you believe someone is in contact with electricity or has just suffered an electrical shock, here are some important tips:

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(307) 786-2800
24 hours a day

Underground Cable Locates
Call 48 hours in advance
(800) 849-2476
OR JUST DIAL 811

Treating Electrical Shocks and Burns *(cont'd from page 2)*

- Look first. Do NOT touch. Do not touch the injured person if they are still in contact with the electrical current. That person, the area around them, and other items in contact with the current may be energized. Touching the victim or surrounding area may pass the current through you. If there are others nearby, make sure they do not touch the person either.



- Call 911 immediately to have first responders and the utility notified.
- Turn off the source of electricity — if known and if safely possible (i.e., circuit breaker or box). If you are not sure, wait for help from the emergency responders.
- Only once the source of electricity is OFF, check for signs of circulation (breathing, coughing, or movement). Provide any necessary first aid.
- Prevent shock. Lay the person down and, if possible, position the head slightly lower than the trunk of the body with the legs elevated.
- Do not move a person with an electrical injury unless the person is in immediate danger.

If an accident involves overhead power lines that have fallen, remember the wire does not have to be sparking or arcing to be live. Always assume the power line is energized, and never touch or approach it. Call 911 immediately to have first responders and the utility notified. If you come upon an accident scene involving a vehicle and downed lines, stay back and warn others to stay away. Make sure the occupants of the car stay inside the vehicle until the utility has arrived to de-energize the lines. For more information on electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Keep Curious Toddlers Safe from Electrical Hazards

At times, keeping toddlers safe seems to be one of those things that is easier said than done. They are curious about the world around them and are constantly learning new things. To help keep them safe at home, it is important to check for and repair any potential electrical issues. Safe Electricity has tips to help you protect toddlers from electrical accidents in your home.

Cracked outlet covers and discolored outlets and switches are indications of electrical problems. These problems can lead to fires and electric shocks. Contact a professional to have your home inspected and repaired. Another step in preventing accidents with toddlers in the home is to install tamper resistant outlets (TROs). Small fingers can easily fit into sockets, and curious children may poke objects into outlets. A TRO has a shutter system that only accepts electric plugs. Because multiple outlets can be found in almost every room of the average household, the cost of replacing these outlets can add up, but that extra cost is well worth a child's safety. Other low cost alternatives include outlet caps and sliding covers, but they are not fail-proof.

Here are some additional tips from Safe Electricity that can help reduce electrical safety hazards in your home and put your mind at ease:

- ✓ Repair or dispose of damaged electronics and cords.
- ✓ Put cords out of sight so that children are not tempted to play with them.
- ✓ Use ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection to prevent shocks. GFCIs detect and prevent dangerous situations where an electric shock could occur. You should have GFCIs anywhere that water and electricity may meet—such as bathrooms, kitchens, and basements.
- ✓ Have a fire extinguisher that is rated for electrical fires. Know where it is located and how to use it.
- ✓ Have smoke alarms, and be sure their batteries work.
- ✓ Be prepared for power outages. Have an emergency kit on hand. It should include items such as flashlights, batteries, first aid kit, water, and non-perishable food.
- ✓ Have a list of emergency phone numbers that includes your electric utility.

For more tips on electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

What are Power Surges and What Can I Do About Them?

As its name suggests, a power surge is a surge or increase of power. The brief jolts of electrical voltage range from minor to severe and can leave their mark. Major surges can damage your computer or TV while minor surges may cause no apparent damage but can take their toll on devices over time.

Electronics and appliances are especially susceptible to a power surge, but spikes in power can also damage outlets or start electrical fires. Although many people associate lightning with power surges, Mother Nature's strike is not the most common culprit.

Other causes can be found at home. Devices that require a lot of power to switch compressors or turn motors on or off – air conditioners, refrigerators and space heaters, for example – call for sudden, brief draws on power. These power demands upset the steady flow of volts in the electrical system. While the surges caused by these items are far less intense than a lightning strike, they can still cause damage.

Other causes of power surges include faulty wiring and overloaded outlets or circuits.

Safe Electricity suggests these options to protect appliances and electronics:

1. Use surge protector strips or devices. Most surge protectors are no match for lightning's wallop, however. During a severe storm, it is best to unplug your computer, televisions, and other electronics.
2. For electronics, consider investing in the surge protector's big brother: uninterruptible power supply devices. They work like a surge protector but have battery backup to keep them running during surges, power reductions or brief outages.
3. Consider having a whole-house surge protector installed by a qualified electrician. Typically installed to the electric service box, it offers greater protection for your appliances than individual surge-protecting devices.
4. If you do not have them already, consider updating outlets with those that feature ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Today's electrical code requires them near a water source for new or remodeled homes. They help prevent electrical shock and fire, and they are reset with the push of a button after they have been tripped.

People who elect whole-house surge protection can

still use the individual plug-in versions for their most sensitive electronics, providing two levels of protection. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Taking on DIY Projects and Safety

It could be the coolest remodeling design you have seen showcased in a magazine, on television, or online. What's more, it might look really easy to do, but never start construction if you do not know how to do so safely. When it comes to home improvement, there is always another awesome task waiting to be finished. Completing a project yourself can save money and be a fulfilling aspect of owning a home. It can also be a path to disaster if safety is not the top of the priority list.

Electricity is just one of the potential hazards that need to be addressed during home improvement projects. The Occupational Health and Safety Administration has some tips on electrical safety to keep you and your Do-It-Yourself (DIY) construction crew safe:

- Use ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) on all 120-volt, single-phase, 15- and 20-ampere receptacles, *or* have an assured equipment grounding conductor program (AEGCP).
- Follow manufacturers' recommended testing procedures to insure GFCIs are working correctly.
- Use double-insulated tools and equipment. You can recognize double-insulated equipment by its distinctive marking of a box within a box.
- Use tools and equipment according to the instructions included in their listing, labeling, or certification.
- Visually inspect all electrical equipment before use. Remove from service any equipment with frayed cords, missing ground prongs, cracked tool casings, etc. Do not use defective equipment until the problem has been corrected.

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) suggests that a clear vision of a project before it begins can help produce a good outcome. It also advises thinking about traffic patterns, furniture size and placement, colors, lighting, and how you plan on using a new or remodeled space. According to NAHB, "A good rule of thumb for any home owner is to avoid projects that require a license or structural changes to walls, roofs, and floors."

Remember if your DIY project has children and pets in the area of construction, make sure there is a plan in place to keep them clear of danger. Get more information on DIY electrical safety at SafeElectricity.org.