



NINNESCAH RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# Watts Ahead

## Ninnescah Rural Electric Co-op, Inc.

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### In Case of an Outage

If your electricity is off for more than a few minutes, please call 800-828-5538. The office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday–Friday. After hours, calls will be answered by dispatch and forwarded to our on-call personnel.

## 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 lighting.
  - ▶ 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](http://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.**

## 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:

- 1 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.
- 2 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.
- 3 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.
- 4 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).
- 5 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.

**6 MAKE SURE THE TRANSFER SWITCH IS ENDORSED BY A REPUTABLE TESTING LABORATORY,** such as UL, and that the installation meets all applicable electrical codes.

**7 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.

**8 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.

**9 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](http://SafeElectricity.org).

## Welcome New Members

Nickolas R Lucas – *Macksville*

Melinda R Wood – *Macksville*

Dale E &/or Janis S Parsons – *Pratt*

Debra J &/or Samuel C Kendall – *Pratt*

Jennifer &/or Benjamin L Hada – *Andrews, TX*

Ethan A &/or Mary Shaw – *Lewis*

James H &/or Peter J Molitor – *Andale*

Brian J Barrett – *Horseheads, NY*

Kaleena K &/or Jamey Nelson – *Larned*

Julie L &/or Alan G Curtis – *Great Bend*

Rani Bryant &/or Shela S Sanders – *Attica*

# When in Doubt, Throw it Out!

## Keep Food Safe When the Power Goes Out

Severe winds, lightning and even squirrels can temporarily cause the power to go out. We understand power outages of any length can be frustrating, especially when your fridge is stocked with perishable foods.

Extended power outages are rare, but when they occur, it's important to understand food safety measures to take to avoid illness.

Here are a few food safety tips to keep in mind before, during and after a power outage.

### Before an Outage

A good rule of thumb is to keep an emergency supply kit on hand. Be sure to include nonperishable food items like bottled water, powdered milk, canned goods, cereal and protein bars in your emergency kit.

If you have advance warning that an outage is possible, fill a cooler with ice — just in case the outage spans several hours. Having a cooler ready to go can buy extra time for your refrigerated, perishable items.

### During an Outage

If an outage occurs, do not open the refrigerator or freezer unless absolutely necessary. An unopened refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours. A half-full freezer will keep

food frozen for about 24 hours and a full freezer for about 48 hours. If it looks like the power outage will last longer than four hours, move your important perishable items to an ice-filled cooler.

### After an Outage

If refrigerated foods have been exposed to temperatures higher than 40 degrees for more than two hours, the American Red Cross recommends discarding the items. If any foods have an unusual color, odor or texture, they should be thrown away.

While most perishable foods should be thrown out after an extended outage, these items are safe to consume after a two-hour exposure to 40-plus degrees:

- ▶ Hard cheeses that are properly wrapped.
- ▶ Butter or margarine that is properly wrapped.
- ▶ Taco, barbecue and soy sauces.
- ▶ Peanut butter, jelly, mustard, ketchup and relish.

The best way to avoid illness from spoiled food during or after an outage is to follow the four-hour rule of thumb. After an outage, always smell and inspect foods before consuming and remember when in doubt, throw it out.

To learn more about food safety after an emergency, visit [www.ready.gov/food](http://www.ready.gov/food).

## KEEP FOODS SAFE during and after a power outage

Refrigerated or frozen foods may not be safe to eat after a power outage. Use these tips to minimize food loss and reduce risk of illness.

### Food Safety Tips

- 1 Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
- 2 Throw out any food with an unusual odor, color or texture.
- 3 Throw out perishable food in your refrigerator after four hours without power or a cold source, like a cooler with ice.



24  
or  
48

Food in a half-full freezer will last 24 hours. Food in a full freezer will last 48 hours.

4

Refrigerated food will last four hours. After four hours, place refrigerated foods in a cooler with ice.

## When in doubt, throw it out.



## 5 Easy Ways to Exercise Your Civic Duty

America's electric cooperatives, including Ninnescah 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.

While Ninnescah Electric is a locally-owned cooperative, we're part of a larger network of electric co-ops. Through our non-partisan grassroots program known as "Co-ops Vote," we're working to enhance the political strength of electric co-ops and boost voter turnout. There's power in numbers, and when we all show up at the polls, we can voice the issues that matter most to our 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](http://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](http://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.

# CO-OPS VOTE

A PROGRAM OF AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

[WWW.VOTE.COOP](http://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**

# HAY is for HORSES

## Use extreme caution near power lines.

Using hay on the farm or ranch is like using water and feed — it is essential. Be careful near overhead power lines. Here are some safety tips to keep in mind.

- ▶ Be aware of overhead power lines when moving bales of hay.
- ▶ Tarps that cover hay can come loose in heavy winds, be whipped into power lines and cause an outage.
- ▶ Do not store hay bales underneath power lines. Bales could get close to or contact a power line, pole or guy wire.

