



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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**TWIN VALLEY
ELECTRIC CO-OP**

NEWS

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FROM THE CEO

Summer Peak is Approaching



Angie Erickson

As energy consumers, most of us know we can save money by making smart energy choices. But did you know that when you use electricity can be just as

important as how much you use?

Throughout the day, energy use fluctuates based on consumer demand. Typically, households use larger amounts of electricity in the morning when most people are getting ready for their day, and in the evenings when people return from work, cook dinner, wash clothes and watch television.

These times when people in our community are using more electricity at the same time are called “peak” hours. The cost for Twin Valley to provide power is higher during these times because of the additional demand for electricity. Peak hours occur between 3-6 p.m. each day excluding weekends and holidays.

By shifting some of your energy use to hours when demand is lower, also known as off-peak hours, you can save money on your energy bills and help keep rates lower for our community.

Here are a few easy ways you can shift energy use to off-peak hours:

- ▶ Adjust your thermostat. During summer months, raise the thermostat a few degrees during peak hours.
- ▶ Wash full loads of clothes in cold water during off-peak hours.
- ▶ Run the dishwasher right before you go to bed, or air-dry dishes by opening the dishwasher instead of using the heated dry cycle.
- ▶ Turn off lights and electronics when not in use. (Try to make this a daily habit, whether during peak or off-peak hours.)
- ▶ Turn off ceiling fans if people aren't in the room. A good rule of thumb is fans cool people, not places.

There are many ways to save energy and money by making a few minor adjustments to your daily routine.

We're here to help. Contact us if you have questions about your energy bill or for additional energy-saving tips.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month



Looking for additional ways to save energy this summer? Your laundry room is a great place to start. Wash clothes with cold water, which can cut one load's energy use by more than half. Your washing machine will use the same amount of energy no matter the size of the clothes load, so fill it up when you can. When drying clothes, separate the heavier cottons. Loads will dry faster and more evenly if you separate heavier cottons like linens and towels from your lightweight clothing.

AT THE MARINA



**the water is
NOT FINE.**

Although the water may look inviting, marinas are not meant to be swimming areas. Docks and boats can carry sources of electricity. If this electricity seeps into the water due to faulty wiring, the water becomes energized.

If you are exposed to water charged with electrical current, you can be shocked and even drown — this is known as electric shock drowning. There are also other dangers of swimming near a marina.

Dangers of Swimming at a Marina

- ▶ Electric shock drowning.
- ▶ Carbon monoxide poisoning from boat exhaust.
- ▶ Contaminated water from a storm or spill.
- ▶ Impact from a boat or its propellers.



Ensure marinas have ground fault circuit interrupters installed and that they are tested often. Keep your boat's electrical system well-maintained and have it inspected regularly.

Stay Safe While Spending Time Outdoors

As temperatures increase and sunny days abound, it is easy to be footloose and fancy free. As you spend more time outdoors, keep these safety tips in mind to have a great summer.

Pools and Hot Tubs

Before opening your pool or hot tub for the season, ensure there is ground fault circuit interrupter protection on underwater lighting circuits, as well as for lighting around pools, hot tubs and spas. Have your pool's electrical system inspected. Faulty wiring can cause swimmers to experience electric shock drowning.

Boating and Swimming

When boating or swimming, know that faulty wiring can cause the water to become energized. Never go swimming near boats plugged into shore power or docks with an electrical source. Energized water can cause electric shock drowning.

While Recreating

According to the National Lightning Safety Council, approximately 440 people are struck and killed by lightning each year.* Nearly two-thirds of the deaths occurred while enjoying outdoor leisure activities — 33% of the fatalities occurred during water-related activities such as boating, spending time on the beach and swimming, while 14% happened during sporting activities such as fishing, soccer and running.

During a Storm

When angry clouds roll in, take them seriously. Have a weather app installed on your phone to inform you of weather alerts. Lightning can occur up to 10 miles away from the heart of the storm, so if you hear thunder, take cover. A watch means that conditions are likely for severe weather to develop; a warning means take action.

When Playing

When flying drones, remote-controlled planes, toys or kites, fly them in a wide-



open area free from overhead power lines. If a toy or object gets stuck in an overhead power line, do not try to remove it. Instead, call your electric co-op and a crew will address the issue safely.

Ensure that overhead power lines do not run through or over a tree before your child starts to climb. Select trees that are in a wide-open space without overhead power lines nearby.

If kids are playing with a ball and it goes inside a substation fence, teach them to never touch or climb the fence to attempt to retrieve it or any other item. Instead, call your electric co-op to safely take care of it. The same precaution applies to a pet or animal inside the fenced area of a substation.

Avoid Releasing Balloons

Although not an outdoor recreational activity per se, be careful with balloons. Metallic balloons if released or accidentally let go can get caught in a power line or other utility equipment and cause a major power outage. In fact, avoid releasing any type of balloon as they can interfere with power lines, substations and aircraft. Plus, birds, turtles and other animals commonly mistake balloons for food, which can harm or kill them.

For additional electrical safety tips, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.

*ANALYSIS OF LIGHTNING-RELATED DEATHS IN THE U.S., 2006–2021

Carbon Monoxide: A Silent Killer

Colorless, odorless and tasteless, carbon monoxide (CO) is a silent and dangerous gas responsible for killing at least 420 people in the United States each year, causing 100,000 visits to the emergency room and 14,000 hospitalizations, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Of these deaths, approximately 85 are caused by portable generators. Some of the potential consequences of CO poisoning include permanent brain and heart damage, fetal death and miscarriage.

Symptoms of CO Poisoning Include:

- ▶ Headache.
- ▶ Weakness.
- ▶ Dizziness.
- ▶ Nausea or vomiting.
- ▶ Shortness of breath.
- ▶ Confusion.
- ▶ Blurred vision.
- ▶ Loss of consciousness.

Knowing the symptoms is important (especially when a non-CO-exposed person is assessing someone who has been exposed). However, many times, CO poisoning overtakes a person before he or she realizes what is happening.

CO can be present anytime an appliance or motor vehicle uses combustion fuel sources, such as gasoline, natural gas, oil, kerosene, propane, charcoal and wood. Usually, the amount of CO produced by these commonly used items is not hazardous. However, when they are used in an enclosed or partially enclosed space, CO can quickly build up, resulting in harmful levels in a matter of minutes.

The good news is that CO poisoning is preventable. To arm yourself against this deadly killer, follow these tips:

- ▶ Install battery-powered CO detectors on every level of your home and check them monthly to ensure they are working.
- ▶ If a CO alarm goes off or if someone is exhibiting symptoms of CO poisoning, call 911 immediately and take everyone outdoors to fresh air as quickly as possible.
- ▶ Consider installing a CO ventilation system, which combats CO by replenishing oxygen in the air.

- ▶ Have your heating system, fireplace, water heater and other combustion-run appliances serviced by a qualified technician every year.
- ▶ Read the instructions before using any combustion-powered appliance.
- ▶ Never use a charcoal grill, lantern or portable camping stove inside a home, tent or camper.
- ▶ Always open the garage door before starting or idling your vehicle, and make sure the door leading to your home from the garage is closed.
- ▶ Never use a portable generator with a combustion engine indoors or within 20 feet of your home or structure.
- ▶ Do not use a portable generator in a partially enclosed structure or area such as a basement, crawlspace, garage, porch, carport, tent, shed, camper or recreational vehicle.
- ▶ Carefully read all instructions when using a space heater that runs on gas or kerosene; always follow ventilation requirements.
- ▶ Avoid standing or swimming within 20 feet of generator exhaust while boating.
- ▶ Never leave a boat's engine running if there are swimmers in the water.
- ▶ Use proper fire prevention techniques and avoid smoke inhalation when possible.
- ▶ Carefully read the instructions and follow all safety precautions on the label when working with methylene chloride, commonly found in paint and varnish removers, which can break down into CO when inhaled.

For more information on electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.



Check the **WEATHER** Before You Go

More than 72% of lightning fatalities occur from June through August.

From 2006 through 2021

- ▶ 446 people were struck and killed by lightning in the U.S.
- ▶ Nearly two-thirds of the deaths happened while people were enjoying outdoor leisure activities such as fishing, camping and running.

June, July and August are the peak months for lightning across the U.S.

- ▶ More than 72% of lightning deaths occurred in these months.
- ▶ Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays having slightly more deaths than any other day of the week.

Lightning often strikes away from heavy rain; it can happen up to 10 miles away from rainfall.

TO PREVENT LIGHTNING-RELATED TRAGEDIES, WHEN THUNDER ROARS, GO INDOORS.

SOURCE: NATIONAL LIGHTNING SAFETY COUNCIL

Energy-Saving Projects for the Weekend Warrior

Are you a weekend warrior? If you're considering home improvement upgrades that save energy and money, we've got a few project ideas for you — all of which can be completed in a day or less!

Here are three energy-saving projects that you can easily tackle whether you're a weekend warrior pro or a DIY dabbler.

Get Smart About Home Cooling and Heating

Cooling and heating your home typically account for a large portion of energy bills. Smart thermostats can help keep your cooling and heating costs in check, with Energy Star®-certified models saving about 8% on annual energy costs.

Now that smart thermostats are more affordable (as little as \$70), this simple upgrade makes for a fun, efficient weekend project. Smart thermostats offer a variety of bells and whistles, but the average model will allow you to set custom temperature schedules, adjust the settings from anywhere using your phone, and over time, learn your cooling and heating preferences.

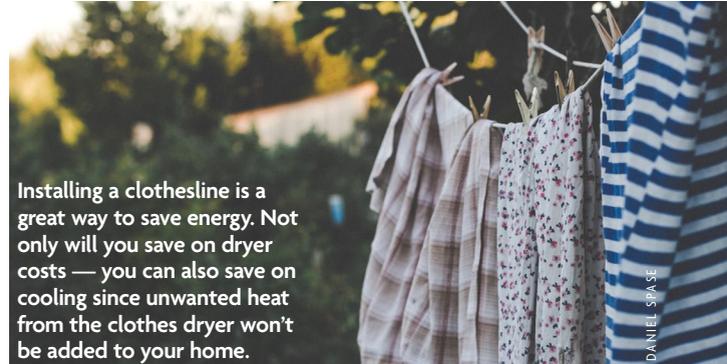
Your new smart thermostat will come with step-by-step instructions, but this project typically involves shutting off your HVAC at the breaker panel, disconnecting/removing the old thermostat, installing the new smart thermostat, and connecting it to your home Wi-Fi.

PLAY IT SAFE: Remember to carefully read the installation instructions before you get started.

Go Green and Boost Your Greenery With a Rain Barrel

If you've got a green thumb, you already know that rainwater is the best water for your outdoor plants. Rainwater is free of minerals, salts and treatment chemicals found in tap water or groundwater. It also contains helpful macronutrients to foster healthy plant growth.

Installing a rain barrel is an easy way to harvest large amounts



Installing a clothesline is a great way to save energy. Not only will you save on dryer costs — you can also save on cooling since unwanted heat from the clothes dryer won't be added to your home.

of rainwater and reduce home water use — it's a win-win. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, one rain barrel can save a homeowner 1,300 gallons of water annually.

Most residential rain barrels range in size from 50 to 90 gallons, so the size you purchase will depend on your watering needs.

The simplest way to install a rain barrel is positioning a plastic or wooden barrel directly under your gutter downspout. Basic piping may be required, but this is an easy way to harvest rainwater, and the barrel won't take up much space. Consider a cover for the top of your rain barrel to keep insects and small debris out of your harvested water.

Create Fresh Savings With a DIY Clothesline

If you have enough outdoor space available, installing a clothesline is a great way to save energy. Not only will you save on dryer costs — but in the summer you can also save on cooling costs since unwanted heat from the clothes dryer won't be added to your home (which makes your air conditioner work harder). Additionally, air drying is much gentler on fabrics and will keep your clothes and linens looking fresh longer.

You can create your own clothesline with two T-posts, wire and hook-and-eye turnbuckles. Depending on your soil, you may need a small amount of fast-setting concrete to set the posts. Another option is installing the line between two trees. A typical load of laundry requires about 35 feet of line, so keep this in mind as you're determining the best location.

If an outdoor clothesline isn't an option, no sweat! You can easily create an indoor drying rack that folds to save space. Home improvement websites like www.thespruce.com and www.hgtv.com offer step-by-step tutorials for a variety of indoor clothes racks.

These are just a few simple ideas to help you save energy and money. So, get out there, roll up those sleeves and tackle a few projects.

Check out Twin Valley Electric's website for additional energy-saving ideas and tips.

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