



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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TWIN VALLEY
ELECTRIC CO-OP

NEWS

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FROM THE CEO

Playing It Safe Online

In today's world, most of us don't leave the front door unlocked. We protect our homes, loved ones and valuables from intruders with locks, alarms and other security measures. Cybersecurity is no different. It's the practice of protecting other valuables such as your identity, banking and health records and other sensitive information from digital attacks and theft.

In addition to pumpkin-spice lattes, crisper air and Halloween festivities, October is the time of year we recognize Cybersecurity Awareness Month. Given our increased reliance on internet-connected devices and gadgets, this month, I'd like to share a few cybersecurity tips.

According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA), an agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security that is responsible for strengthening cybersecurity and

infrastructure protection, these are the four best ways to keep you and your family safe online.

1 IMPLEMENT MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION (ALSO KNOWN AS TWO-STEP VERIFICATION) ON YOUR ACCOUNTS. The additional

layer of protection makes it much harder for criminals to access your information. Even if a hacker obtains your password, they may be unable to access your accounts if multi-step verification is enabled.

2 UPDATE YOUR SOFTWARE. This is one of the easiest ways to protect your personal data. When downloading a software update, make sure it's coming straight from the company that created it. Beware of fake

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Angie Erickson

ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Did you know using your dishwasher is more energy efficient than washing dishes by hand? To maximize efficiency, wash full loads in the dishwasher and don't block the arms or other parts that move while the appliance is in use. For additional savings, turn on the "air dry" setting instead of using the "heat dry" setting and use a rinse aid to help dishes dry faster without spotting and streaking.

SOURCE: WWW.ENERGY.GOV



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pop-ups that request urgent downloads. Better yet, turn on automatic updates.

3 THINK BEFORE YOU CLICK. Most successful cyberattacks start with a phishing email. Don't take the bait when cybercriminals go phishing. Avoid emails (or texts) that look too good to be true, oddly urgent, poorly crafted or include unusual requests.

4 CREATE STRONG PASSWORDS, USING LONG, UNIQUE AND COMPLEX WORDS OR PHRASES. Consider using a password manager to save time, work across all devices, protect your identity and notify you of potential phishing websites.

For the Young People in Your Household

Just as you would talk with your children about safety in the physical world, discuss ways to stay safe online. Help them understand the public nature of the internet. Young people need to know early on, that what is shared online stays online and is difficult (if not impossible) to take back. Just as you would guard your money or valuables, children need to learn to

guard their personal information, especially on social networks. As a parent or guardian, help your children learn about and use the privacy and security settings on social networks and gaming sites.

Keeping the Electric Grid and Your Data Secure

We're doing our share on the cyber front. Part of offering excellent service is keeping that service secure and reliable. For Twin Valley Electric, reliability means repairing wear and tear, upgrading our equipment to withstand storms and severe weather and using technology and proven practices to keep our system secure from cybersecurity issues.

We also work together with co-ops across the state in protecting our infrastructure. We learn from each other to keep the grid's network secure.

While we can't stop a storm or predict every disruption, as a co-op, we do everything we can to keep the lights on and our members protected. Because if we all do our part, our interconnected world will be safer and more secure for everyone.

Don't Text and Drive

Would you drive down a football field with your eyes closed?

Texting diverts your attention from driving for about 5 seconds. At 55 miles per hour, that's enough time to travel the length of a football field.



SAFETY TIP

In the bathroom, kitchen and anywhere an outlet is located near a water source, check the ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) **once a month**. The fast-acting circuit breaker shuts off the power in case of a wiring issue.



TEST



SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.COM

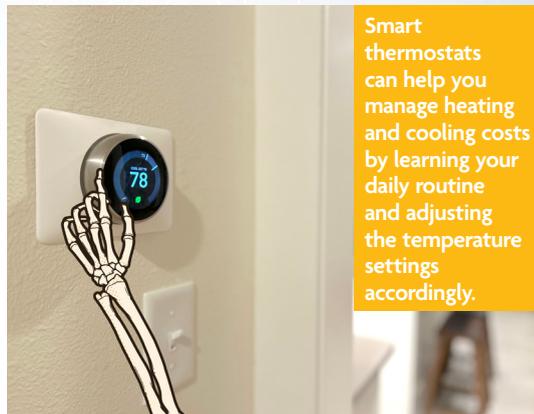
SPOOKY Energy Savings

This spooky season, we're sharing a few energy-saving tricks so you can treat yourself to lower energy bills. Here are four simple ways to summon the spirit of energy efficiency.

Conjure instant savings with a smart thermostat. One of the easiest ways to save energy is through thermostat control, since home heating and cooling account for a large portion of monthly energy use. **SMART THERMOSTATS** can help you manage heating and cooling costs by learning your daily routine and adjusting the temperature settings accordingly. You can control a smart thermostat from anywhere (through your smart phone), which allows you to prevent unnecessary energy consumption while you're away. Sorcery!

Get rid of goosebumps by eliminating ghostly drafts. The winter chill is just around the corner, so now is the time to **SEAL AIR LEAKS** around your home. Apply caulk and weatherstripping around drafty windows and doors to make your home more comfortable and lower your energy use.

Illuminate your lair with energy efficient lighting. **LED BULBS** use 75% less energy and last 25 times longer than incandescent lightbulbs. Make the switch to reduce energy used for lighting.



Smart thermostats can help you manage heating and cooling costs by learning your daily routine and adjusting the temperature settings accordingly.

Remember to use LEDs when it's time to decorate for the upcoming holiday season. LED light strings offer an average of 88% energy savings compared to traditional incandescent light strings.

Stir up savings with countertop cauldrons. Cooler weather summons our favorite soup recipes. Small countertop appliances like **SLOW COOKERS** use less energy than cooking meals on the stovetop. Grab your book of spells (or recipes) and start stirring up savings in the kitchen.

When we look around our homes, there are many opportunities to save energy. So this spooky season, investigate your space and unlock a different kind of magic — the kind that brings real energy savings.



LED bulbs use 75% less energy and last 25 times longer than incandescent lightbulbs.



Small countertop appliances like slow cookers use less energy than cooking meals on the stovetop.

Think Before You Climb: Don't Take Safety Shortcuts

A ladder is often necessary, whether it is for a home improvement project, clearing the gutters or hanging decorative lights. However, before rushing into a project, take a few minutes to inspect your ladder and ensure it is the right one for the job.

Each year in the United States, more than 100 people die and thousands more are injured from ladder-related falls, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). There are five major causes for ladder-related fall incidents, according to NIOSH:

- ▶ **INCORRECT EXTENSION LADDER SETUP ANGLE:** In approximately 40% of cases, the cause of ladder-related injuries is a ladder sliding out at the base due to an incorrect setup angle.
- ▶ **INAPPROPRIATE LADDER SELECTION:** Selecting a ladder with the proper duty rating for intended use is also important to avoid structural failure. Select the correct ladder for the job.
- ▶ **INSUFFICIENT LADDER INSPECTION:** Reduce the likelihood of ladder structural failure by practicing regular inspection and maintenance.
- ▶ **IMPROPER LADDER USE:** Overreaching, carrying objects, applying excessive force, slips and missteps are also frequent causes of ladder-related fall injuries.
- ▶ **LACK OF ACCESS TO LADDER SAFETY TOOLS AND INFORMATION:** Small companies that account for up to 80% of all construction companies, as well as domestic ladder users, such as homeowners, typically do not receive the required safety training on the proper use of extension ladders and step ladders.

Don't Skip the Inspection

Before using a ladder, check to see if it is broken, in disrepair or not functioning as it should. If this is the case, ensure no one uses it until it is properly repaired. Look for:

- ▶ Cracks.
- ▶ Serious dents.
- ▶ Deformed or missing steps/rungs.
- ▶ Missing or uneven feet.
- ▶ Loose steps/rungs.
- ▶ Defective locks and spreader braces.

Look Up First

Always look up and lookout for overhead power lines before climbing, transporting or positioning a ladder. When moving a ladder, carry it horizontally instead of vertically since getting too close or contacting overhead power lines could cause electrocution. Always be aware of overhead power lines and:

- ▶ **KEEP YOURSELF AND ALL EQUIPMENT 20 FEET AWAY FROM OVERHEAD POWER LINES.**
 - ▶ Electricity can arc or jump if a ladder gets too close to a power line or pole.
 - ▶ A ladder could make direct contact with the line.
 - ▶ **USE A LADDER DURING IDEAL WEATHER CONDITIONS.**
 - ▶ Rain can make the ground slippery.
 - ▶ Wind could blow a ladder into a power line.
 - ▶ **DO NOT TRIM TREES/BRANCHES THAT ARE NEAR POWER LINES.**
 - ▶ By law, only certified line clearance tree trimmers can do so.
 - ▶ **DO NOT USE WATER OR BLOWER EXTENSIONS TO CLEAN GUTTERS NEAR OVERHEAD LINES.**
 - ▶ All power lines can cause electrocution, including those feeding your home.
 - ▶ Always follow the 20-foot distance rule when working or playing outside.
- An aluminum ladder is a great conductor of electricity; a wooden ladder can be one too, depending on the condition of the ladder and whether it is wet or has metal parts.
- Anything that elevates you can take you too close to a power line if you are not aware of your surroundings.

LOOK UP BEFORE YOU CLIMB

USING A LADDER OR ANYTHING THAT ELEVATES YOU NEAR OVERHEAD POWER LINES COULD CAUSE ELECTROCUTION IF YOU ARE NOT AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS. WHEN USING A LADDER:

Keep yourself and all equipment 20 feet away from overhead power lines.

- ▶ Electricity can arc or jump if a ladder gets too close.
- ▶ A ladder could make direct contact with the line.

Avoid wet or windy weather conditions.

- ▶ Rain can make the ground slippery.
- ▶ Wind could blow a ladder into a power line.

Do not trim trees/branches near power lines.

- ▶ Trimming near power lines is dangerous.
- ▶ By law, only certified line tree trimmers can trim near power lines.

Do not use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near overhead lines.

- ▶ All power lines can cause electrocution, including those feeding your home.
- ▶ Always follow the 20-foot distance rule when working or playing outside.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFETELECTRICITY.COM