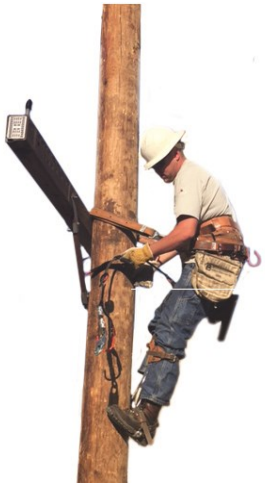
BURT COUNTY PUBLIC POWER

PO Box 209
Tekamah, NE 68061

It's Your Power!



Just In Case: Be Prepared For An Outage

Thankfully, lengthy outages do not happen on a regular basis. That does not mean you should not prepare for them, however.

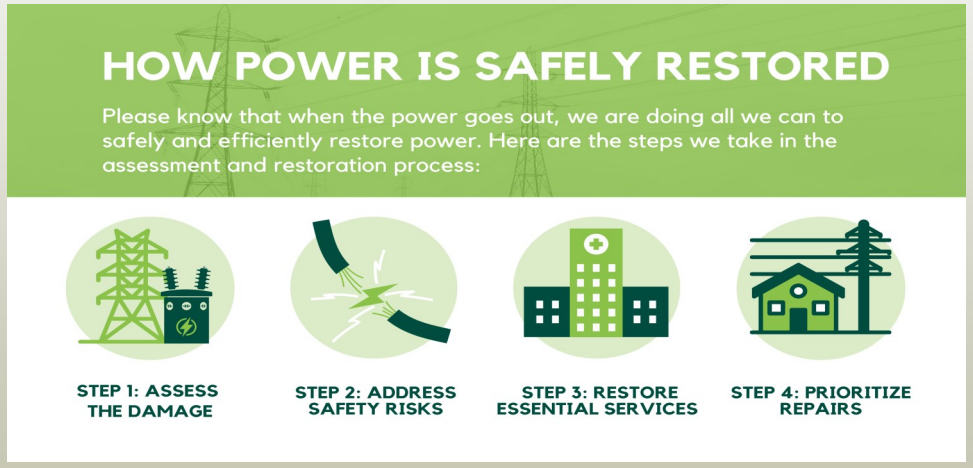
Safe Electricity and **Burt County Public Power** suggest you:

- Have a storm kit ready that includes flashlights, bottled water, non-perishable food, battery-operated radio, batteries, portable cell phone chargers that are fully charged, hand sanitizer and first-aid supplies.
- Have alternate plans for refrigerating or accessing medicines and using power-dependent medical devices.
- Find out where your local storm shelters are and have a plan for getting there if needed and it is safe to do so.

During a power outage:

- Call us to report the power outage.
- Keep freezers and refrigerators closed to preserve food.
- Only use generators outdoors and away from windows and doors; do not use them in a garage.
- Do not use a gas stove to heat your home.
- Disconnect appliances and electronics to avoid damage from electrical surges.
- If safe, go to an alternate location for heat or cooling.
- If weather conditions allow, check on neighbors. This is especially important since cell phone and internet communications may be disrupted and they may be unable to call for help.

For more information about electrical safety and storm preparation, go to SafeElectricity.org.



Burt's Briefs

After Hour Outage Calls

Burt County Public Power District is using Nebraska Public Power Districts Customer Care Call Center for after hour outage & customer-service calls. Dial **(888) 835-1620.**

10 Tips for Fire Safety

1. Install smoke alarms (Replace alarms that are 10 or more years old)
2. Automatic home fire sprinkler system. (Sprinklers can contain and even extinguish a home fire)
3. Plan your escape. (Practice your escape plan by holding a fire drill twice a year).
4. In a fire, crawl low under smoke. (Smoke and hear rise, so during a fire there's cleaner, cooler air near the floor)
5. Smokers' be Safe. (If someone's been smoking in your home, check on and around furniture, including under cushions, for smoldering cigarettes.
6. Cook Safely. (Always stay with the stove when cooking, or turn off burners if you walk away).
7. Keep Matches and Lighters out of sight. (Lock them up high and out of reach, and use only child resistant lighters).
8. Use Electricity Safely. (Know the warning signs of problems for electrical appliances: flickering lights, smoke or odd smells, blowing fuses, tripping circuit breakers or frayed or cracked cords)
9. .Space Heaters. (Keep portable and other space heaters at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn, and turn heaters off when you leave home or go to bed).
10. Stop, Drop, Roll-Cool and Call. (If your clothes catch fire, stop don't run. Drop gently to the ground; cover your face with your hands, and roll over and over or back and forth to smother the flames. Cool the burn with cool water for 10-15 minutes. Call for help, 911.

What Happens Behind The Scenes During A Power Outage?

The year 2020 was unique, to say the least, thanks to the arrival of COVID-19. Contributing to the chaos was a record-breaking hurricane season, intense heat waves, lightning storms that sparked wildfires, and various other inclement weather concerns.

What do all these weather phenomena have in common? Unfortunately, they all had the potential to result in power outages.

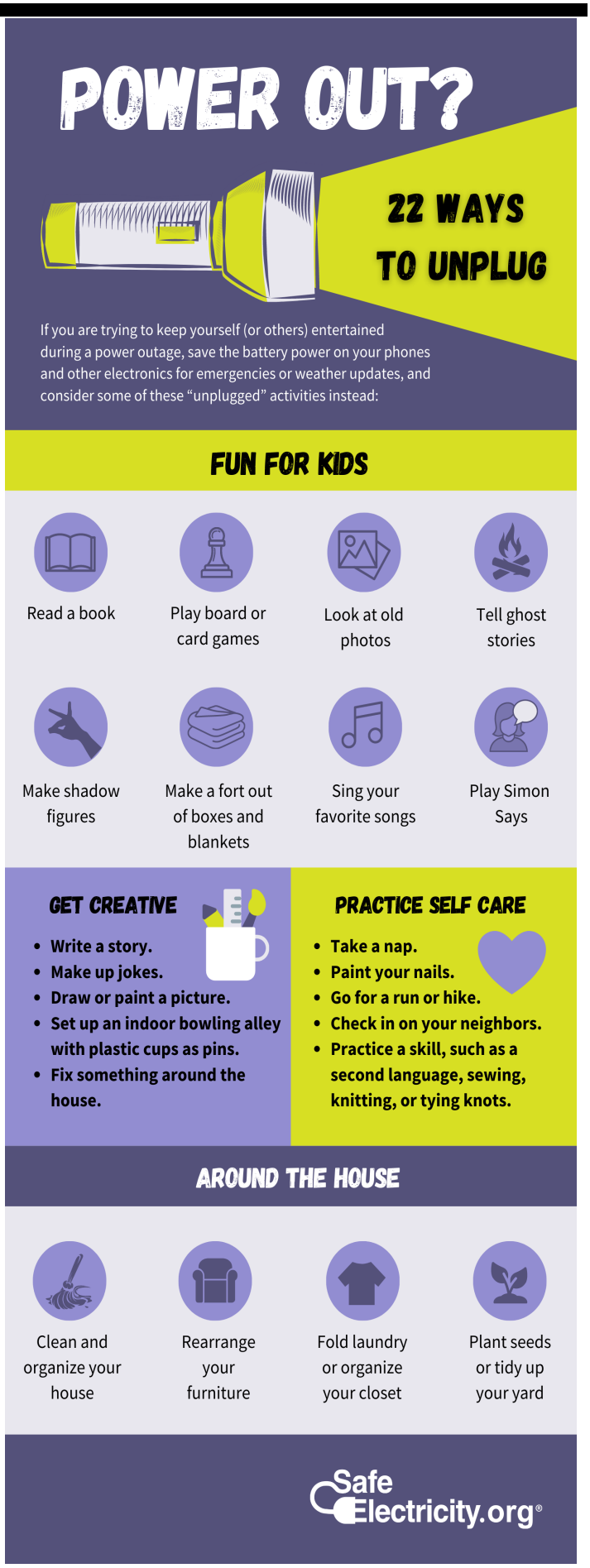
Here in the U.S., we are fortunate to have an advanced power grid in place. Power transmission and distribution is reliable in our country, and we are proud to deliver the electricity you depend on each day. Excluding outage times attributed to major weather or other catastrophic events, electricity consumers in our country typically experience only about two hours of total power interruptions per year, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. When outages due to major events are taken into consideration, the EIA reports the total outage time at six hours a year.

What happens on our end when the power goes out? Rest assured we swing into action in a safe and efficient manner to ensure your power is restored. How long that takes depends on several factors: the extent of the storm's destruction, the number of outages, and how long it takes for our work crews to safely access the storm-damaged areas. We are careful to follow standard restoration procedures to ensure safety and to get the job done right by:

- Assessing damage to utility equipment.
- Addressing immediate safety risks, including downed power lines.
- Ensuring that essential public health and safety facilities are operational.
- Prioritizing repairs that will restore power to the greatest number of people first.
- Evaluating power plants for damage and restore them to working order.
- Repairing transmission lines that carry power to large areas.
- Assessing and repairing (in this order) substations, distribution lines, and service lines to properties.

Thank you for your patience during power outages. Know that in the event of an outage, we are working hard to restore it as safely and efficiently as possible, day and night.

For more information about preparing for outages or storms, or about electrical safety, go to SafeElectricity.org.



Mother Nature's Wrath Can Mean Service Disruptions

Although we work hard to maintain our equipment, monitor power delivery 24/7, and do all we can to keep the lights on, there are circumstances beyond our control that can interfere with power delivery. Winter weather is one example. Winter storms can impact the distribution of electricity due to ice, heavy winds, sleet, and other extreme conditions.

Regardless of the reason, know that when the lights go out—even during extreme weather—we are doing all we can to safely and efficiently restore power.

Along with causing outages, wintery conditions can cause hiccups with power delivery that include blinking lights or ebbs and flows in the amount of power that comes into your home. Although blinking lights can be a symptom of other problems such as loose wiring connections or overloaded circuits, they can also be caused by extreme weather conditions.

Wintery conditions include:

Ice/freezing rain: Ice accumulation on power lines make them heavy. One-half an inch of ice can add as much as 500 pounds to a power line. This added weight can impact power distribution and even bring down a power line. Ice that forms on power lines also increases its surface area, which means gusts of wind have more to catch. The weight of ice on tree limbs can cause them to fall on power lines as well.

Wind: Wind can cause tree branches to brush power lines, which can result in blinking or flickering lights. This is why it's so important for us to keep trees cleared around power lines and poles. In addition, heavy winds (or extreme wind plus ice) can cause lines to move and sway. If they gain enough momentum, they can gallop or jump. This, in turn, can cause disruptions in service since the extreme motion can cause lines to either break or make contact with each other, which they are not meant to do.

Melting Ice: Melting ice can be extremely heavy, putting extra strain on power lines and causing the lines to touch or rest on one another. Because of this, melting ice can cause outages even though the temperature is rising. Depending on conditions, melting ice can cause as many or more problems than the ice itself.

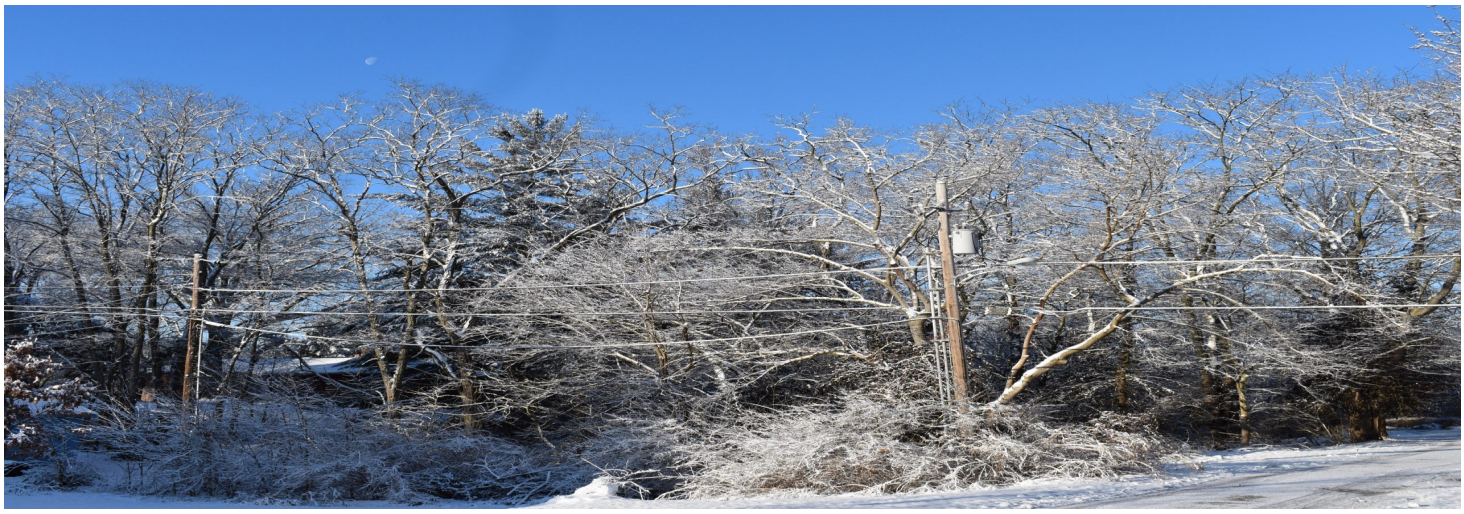
Wind or ice + tree branches: In any weather condition (or even in calm conditions), **tree-related issues cause the most power outages** in many service areas. Branches, limbs or even tree trunks can fall into power lines and cause problems. Add wind, freezing rain, or ice to the mix for an increased potential for problems.

Icy roads: Vehicles sliding on ice or that collide with one another can strike a power pole or pad-mounted transformer, causing an outage or other problems.

Blizzards: Heavy snowfall, icy roads, or reduced visibility can make it a little more difficult for our crews to get out and fix problems, although we do all we can to get out there to address service issues as soon as possible.

Be sure to have a storm preparedness kit ready before a storm strikes to help get you and your family through a power outage. Items to gather include bottled water, non-perishable food, blankets, warm clothing, hand sanitizer, first aid kit/medicine, flashlight, radio, back-up phone chargers, extra batteries, and toiletries.

To learn more about preparing for storms and electrical safety, go to SafeElectricity.org.



Nebraska Extension News

By Aaron Nygren , Extension Educator

Private Pesticide Training Options in 2021

Many of you may have received a letter from the Nebraska Department of Agriculture in December indicating that your certification to use restricted use pesticides will expire in 2021. To renew, Nebraska Extension and Nebraska Department of Agriculture are planning to offer private applicators a variety of both in-person training, on-line training, and test options this winter. In addition, these options will meet the requirements for those needing certification for the first time.

The first option is the traditional in-person private application training. These are planned to be held at locations around the area, depending on local health department rules. Unlike previous years, pre-registration will be required due to room capacity limitations, so attendees will be required to call their local Extension Office to register. Attendees may be required to wear masks during this 2 to 2 1/2 hour training. The cost of the training is $50/person. For more information contact your local Extension Office.

The next option is the online private self-study course. A new online training was developed in 2021 and is available at pested.unl.edu/certification-and-training. The online option consists of modules covering different aspects of pesticide training that will take 3 to 4 hours to complete. However, there is a test-out option at the beginning that if passed with a 70% of greater, bypasses the rest of the training. This option is flexible to your schedule, and costs $50/person.

Another option that will be available in March and April is to attend via Zoom. Watch for more information on these trainings in the coming months.

For those that are not comfortable attending in-person training and that do not have internet or feel comfortable using a computer, there is a hard copy home self-study and exam. Please contact the UNL Pesticide Safety Education Program at 402-472-1632 to arrange for a hard copy to be mailed to you. Cost is $75/person.

The last option is to take a written, closed-book exam given by the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) in Lincoln. Starting January 1, 2021 applicators should visit pested.unl.edu, for a list of available test-only dates, times, locations, and to register. The cost is $5/person.

Remember that upon the completion of your private pesticide applicator training, the Nebraska Department of Agriculture will send a billing invoice for an additional $25 state license fee. The license fee covers the three-year certification period.

For more information, feel free to give me a call at 402-352-3821, email me at anygren2@unl.edu, follow me on Twitter @colfaxcountyext, or contact your local Nebraska Extension office.

Burt County
Public Power District News
Tekamah, Nebraska 68061
Phone 374-2631 or 1-888-835-1620

Meetings

In accordance with Nebraska Statute, notice is hereby given that the regular meetings of the Board of Directors of the Burt County Public Power District are held on the 1st Thursday of each month, commencing at 9:30 A.M. at the district office located in Tekamah, Nebraska. In the event that a holiday falls on the said 1st Thursday, the meeting date shall be as set by the Board of Directors and published in the Legal Notice.

An agenda for each regular meeting of the board is available for public inspection during business hours at least three (3) days prior to each meeting; provided however, that the Board of Directors shall have the right to modify the said agenda to include items of an emergency nature.

Office Hours
7:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.