

**BURT COUNTY**

# PUBLIC POWER

PO Box 209  
Tekamah, NE 68061

*It's Your Power!*



“ Please be patient when the power goes out. Workers need to efficiently and safely restore power. ”



## Do Your Part to Keep Lineworkers Safe

It's nearing 5 p.m. on a workday. Your boss wanted that last-minute report and your kids need to be picked up from soccer or play practice. You jump in your car and on the way you approach a work zone. You don't have time to slow down so you rush through it and ignore the orange work zone signs.

\* \* \*

You're having a garage sale and you think posting a sign on a utility pole won't hurt. Everyone does it, right?

\* \* \*

Either of these scenarios could injure or kill one of our lineworkers.

The job of an electric lineworker is not easy. Lineworkers take great pride in providing safe and reliable service, but their job involves working on and around live power out in the elements. We ask you to do your part to keep them safe:

1. Slow down and move over in work zones. Cars or trucks that go too fast not only endanger workers on the ground. Driving too fast or not moving over can also put a lineworker who is working high up in a bucket in danger by causing it to move or sway.
2. Do not post anything on a utility pole, especially with staples, nails or tacks. These can puncture insulated gloves or other protective clothing and expose workers to high voltages.
3. Never plug a generator into an indoor or outdoor wall outlet. The power that back feeds into the electric line could electrocute a utility worker.
4. Please be patient when the power goes out. Workers need to efficiently and safely restore power.

We appreciate your help in keeping our employees safe. For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://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 heat 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.

# Keep Your Furry Friends Safe Around Electricity

You do all you can to keep your pets healthy: you take them to the veterinarian for checkups, feed them well and ensure they are up to date on vaccinations. After all, for many people, pets are part of the family.

Two-thirds (67 percent) of U.S. households, or about 85 million families, own at least one pet, according to the 2019-2020 National Pet Owners Survey. The survey was conducted by the American Pet Products Association, and the numbers are up 11 percent from 1988.

There is something else you can do for your pets, and that is to keep them safe around electricity. **Burt County Public Power District** and **Safe Electricity** offer these tips:

- Puppies and other pets love to chew on electrical cords. Keep cords out of sight or hidden with a cord cover. Provide teething or play alternatives.
- Watch your pet around dangling or sagging cords, including phone or tablet charging cables. Unplug charging cables once your devices are charged. Not only do they draw a small amount of energy when not in use, but the dangling cords are just crying to be played with.
- Watch where you place lamps and other plugged-in items. Lamps can be a fire hazard if they are knocked over, especially if they have halogen bulbs.
- Do not leave your pet alone around items that get hot: curling irons and straighteners, an outdoor grill, a portable heater and other electric appliances, including cooktops.

Pet proof your home much like you would for a baby or toddler. If you suspect your pet has been shocked or burned, take it to the vet right away. Owners may not realize a pet has been shocked until a few hours later when it has trouble breathing. Other symptoms include ulcers in the mouth and lesions on the tongue and gums.

For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

67% of U.S. households, or about 85 million families, own at least one pet.

Keep pets safe around electricity.

Safe Electricity.org

\*Source: 2019-2020 APPA National Pet Owners Survey



## Why is my power out? When power goes out, we are working hard to restore it

We hate it when the power goes out just as much as you do. When there is an outage, we work hard to resume service as quickly and safely as possible.

Many times, the reasons for outages are beyond our control. Here are the main reasons the power goes out:

1. **STORMS** — Conditions brought on by storms such as high winds, ice and lightning can interrupt service. Lightning itself does not impact outages as much as people think, but it can strike trees and cause branches or even whole trees to fall on distribution lines. Lightning can cause a problem, however, if it strikes substation equipment, such as a large transformer. Strong high winds and ice that accumulates on lines can also impact distribution.
2. **TREES AND VEGETATION** – Branches, limbs or trunks can fall on lines and vegetation (such as vines) can grow around poles, lines or other equipment. Ice and wind can make matters worse. This is why we work so hard to keep power lines and equipment clear.
3. **ANIMALS** — It is estimated that **11 percent** of all outages are caused by our furry friend the squirrel. They love to chew on the weatherproof coating around lines. Other critters like turkeys and snakes can interfere with service too. A bird on a wire is harmless and safe for the bird as long as it touches the line and nothing else.
4. **ACCIDENTS** — Cars, trucks, and farm equipment that have a run-in with a utility pole can cause an outage.
5. **PUBLIC DAMAGE** — Unsafe digging, equipment or line damage, vandalism or theft can all cause interruptions in the energy chain.
6. **OVERLOAD** — This happens where demand spikes, such as when too many air conditioners run on a hot summer day, causing blackouts or brownouts.
7. **EQUIPMENT** issues — We maintain and inspect all of our lines and equipment regularly; however, sometimes equipment malfunctions. We strive to address any problem as soon as it happens.

For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

## What do Squirrels, Birds and Snakes Have in Common?

Besides being cute, fun to watch, or just plain slithery, animals can disrupt power. Although we do all we can to prevent animal interference by using equipment guards, anti-roosting devices or other animal-friendly deterrents, sometimes our efforts are no match for persistent and curious critters who use overhead power lines as a superhighway or substations as a nesting ground.

According to the Electrical Engineering Portal (EEP), the following classes of animals have caused shorts and subsequent power outages or service disruptions:

1. **Squirrels** love to use power lines as their overhead highway. They are agile and crafty – oftentimes equipment guards and other deterrents cannot keep them away, much like a squirrel outsmarting a bird feeder. If they touch the power line and pole (or other equipment) simultaneously, the electric current travels through them and their demise can cause problems with power transmission.
2. **Mice, rats and gophers** (oh my!) sometimes cause interruptions in service by gnawing through underground cables. These offenders (and others) can also try to make a home in a substation, which often does not turn out well for them and can cause a hiccup in power distribution for us.
3. **Birds**: different species can cause different types of problems. Although small birds can sit on a wire without a problem, some larger varieties like to build nests at the tops of poles, on transmission towers and in substations. Nesting material can cause faults (abnormal electric currents), and bird droppings can contaminate insulators, according to EEP. Other times, large birds with long wing spans can touch a live power line with one wing tip and something else with the other and become a conductor for the voltage to pass through them. This is called “bridging.”
4. **Snakes** – these slithering reptiles can disrupt service in both substations and underground service. They can squeeze through small spaces, travel upward, and have enough length to bridge from one current to another, causing a problem.
5. **Fire ants** – these are often classified as animals (who knew?), and they are originally from South America. They have migrated to the southern United States and they like to build nests in pad-mounted transformer cabinets. Their presence can cause short circuits and they can eat conductor insulation. Needless to say, they can also make it a challenge to maintain equipment.
6. **Large animals** like cattle, horses, bison, and bears can cause damage to guy wires and poles. They can cause physical damage and cause an outage or make the system more prone to outages in the future. Feisty bears can climb wooden utility poles and make contact with live conductors.

For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

# Nebraska Extension News

By Larry Howard , Extension Educator

## Winter Feeding of Beef Cattle and Dealing with Moldy Hay

Winters that are cold and have several days of snow cover can affect the ability of cattle to get the nutrition they need if they are still grazing corn stalks or winter pasture. When cattle graze, they often select plant parts like corn husks and grain or grass leaves that contain higher amounts of protein or energy than do the coarser stalks and stems. With snow, it can become difficult or impossible for cattle to make these selections. So cattle will eat what they can get to easily. The end result may be a diet that is less nutritious than usual. If this goes on for very long cattle might lose weight and go out of condition.

Producers will need to estimate how much different the animals' diets are from normal and provide supplements to replace those nutrients that are unavailable because of the snow cover. Normally you would supplement your cattle after they have grazed the best plant parts. All the snow does is force you to begin a little sooner or increase the amount they receive by a small amount. If cows are usually a bit fat following winter, maybe they don't need the extra supplement. But if you usually end up with cows with just enough weight to be healthy, some extra feed might be needed this year. That little extra might make all the difference this winter.

In many cases producers will have to feed some hay during the winter. More than likely, last summer you baled some hay that was a little too wet and now it may have some mold. Feeding moldy hay to livestock is a tough decision. Although all hay contains some mold, when mold becomes easily noticeable the decision becomes important.

Usually, mold makes hay less palatable, which can result in lower intake or even having animals refuse to eat the hay. Other problems from mold can occur because of mycotoxins produced by certain mold fungi. This is a big part of the decision to make since not all molds produce mycotoxins and the amount produced by those that do is not always predictable.

Direct negative effects of moldy hay are difficult to document. Horses may be more sensitive to mold than other livestock. Mold spores often contribute to respiratory and digestive problems like colic or heaves in horses. Cattle apparently are less affected by mold, but certain molds can cause mycotic abor-

## Burt County Public Power District News

Tekamah, Nebraska 68061  
Phone 374-2631 or 1-888-835-1620

### Board of Directors

Gerald Bohling	President
Michael J. Chatt	Vice President
Michael R. Williams	Treasurer
Greg Johnson	Secretary
Dwane Piere	Director
Scott Lindstrom	Director
Jonathon Dockhorn	Manager
RVW, Inc.	Engineer
Blankenau Wilmoth LLP	Attorney

### 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.

tions. People can also be affected by mold spores. Mold can cause a condition called farmer's lung, where the fungus actually grows in lung tissue. So people should try to avoid breathing in many of these spores.

The best course of action is to minimize feeding moldy hay to more sensitive animals, like horses or pregnant cows. This may require a keen eye or sensitive nose when selecting hay to feed each day. Mixing moldy hay with other feedstuffs can dilute problems sometimes, but be careful that you don't make your animals sick by tricking them into eating bad hay that they normally would refuse.

Moldy hay can be a difficult problem to deal with. Common sense and good observation often are your best decision aids.

