

BURT COUNTY

PUBLIC POWER

It's Your Power!

PO Box 209
Tekamah, NE 68061



When Winter Winds Howl, Power Lines Can Gallop

Severe weather with strong winds can cause damage to trees, buildings, and electrical equipment. While power lines can sway in high winds, add freezing rain or icy conditions and the result can be galloping power lines.

Galloping is the bouncing or bucking movement of overhead lines and can cause several problems, from temporary power interruptions to equipment damage, the collapse of power poles and downed lines.

Galloping lines often result from ice buildup on one side of the power line due to strong winds. The buildup of ice creates an airfoil, which changes the flow of air around the line, causing bouncing wires, or galloping power lines.

There isn't much utility workers can do until the wind dies down. That's why many power lines have objects, like twisted wire or round or angular pieces of metal attached to the line. These help reduce galloping of lines and prevent potential danger.

If you see galloping power lines:

- Keep your distance—ice can break off or power lines break loose.
- Contact your utility to make them aware of the potential damage as soon as possible.

If you see a downed power line:

- Stay far away and warn others to stay away too.
- Remember, a downed line can remain energized even if it is not sparking or arcing.
- Always report the location of a downed power line and damaged electrical equipment.

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

To learn more about storm and outage safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

BEWARE
GALLOPING LINES

Safe
Electricity.org

Burt's Briefs

Holiday Closing. Our office will be closed Friday, December 31st in recognition of New Year's Day. In case of emergency, please call our toll free number 1-888-835-1620. Thank you!

Report "Clearance" Problems. This is the time of year when a line clearance problem can become a fatality. If you know of a situation anywhere on our lines where clearance is not adequate, let us know. We would rather fix it now, than after it is too late.

Time to Change Filters. This is just a reminder that it is time to change your furnace filter. Actually, we recommend that you change filters once a month in the heavy heating and air conditioning season. This helps air flow through your heating better giving you better efficiency, not to mention your house doesn't get so dusty.

Water Heater Maintenance. You should drain 10 gallons of water from your water heater. This helps remove some of the sediment that can build up in the bottom of your water heater tank, hindering the proper transfer of heat.

Call us to Replace Meter Seals. Sometimes meter seals are removed by electricians for emergency reasons. If this is the case, call us and we will stop by and replace the seal. Customers are not authorized to remove meter seals. In some cases the customer may be suspected of meter tampering if the seal is found missing. Load control boxes also have meter seals and should be intact when boxes are checked. Please check your meter to be sure your seal is intact. If it is not, call us.

Shopping for a Space Heater? Choose Wisely

If your home heating system does not deliver the toasty warmth you want or you would like to dial down your thermostat to save on your energy bill, a space heater can help make up the difference. Multiple types exist on the market, but the most important thing to remember is to buy one that you can operate safely.

Dispose of old space heaters with exposed coils, those that are dangerous to use (e.g., worn or cracked cords) or those that operate inefficiently. Many that are available today have safety features that older versions do not, such as timers, tip-over prevention or auto shut-off.

Before you purchase an electric heater, determine the square footage of the space you want to warm and whether you have a safe spot to place it. Inefficient or excessively large options will only run up your electric bill without much benefit to you or your family.

Types of space heaters include:

Metal coil and fan: Perhaps the most common and affordable type of space heater, this type uses electricity to heat a metal coil that is safely tucked inside. The fan(s) suck cold air from the room, heat it, and redistribute it at a higher temperature.

Ceramic radiant: Similar to the metal coil variety, these space heaters also include ceramic plates inside. They absorb and store heat so that it radiates outward, even after you turn the heater off. Quick and long-lasting radiant heat makes these some of the most efficient space heaters.

Infrared: These larger and usually more expensive space heaters use electromagnetic waves to heat objects in the room. In other words, your furniture, walls and you are heated up safely, so the increased temperature radiates out from everything. This technology is often used in fake fireplaces.

Radiator-style oil: If you like the appearance of old-fashioned radiators or need something larger without a fan, consider an oil-filled space heater. An upside is that these radiate a lot of heat after they are turned off; the downside is that the unit itself can get quite hot and increase the risk of burns.

No matter what type of heater you choose, there are safety precautions you should follow. These will help prevent house fires, property damage and injury.

- Use a space heater with a minimum of three feet of clearance on all sides.
- Do not put a heater in a doorway or high-traffic area in the home.
- Place the heater on a flat, safe surface.
- Consider using one with built-in safety features.
- Do not plug one into an extension cord.

feeling chilled?

HEAT YOUR SPACE SAFELY



Place on a flat,
level surface



Keep flammable items
at least 3 feet away



Make sure the cord is
not frayed or cracked



Plug it directly into
an outlet



Do not use an
extension cord or
power strip, which
can overheat



Follow all instructions
and use models
endorsed by a
reputable testing lab



Do not use around
small children or pets



Do not use one with a
damaged plug or
prongs

Pictures from the Field 2021



Nebraska Extension News

By Kathleen Cue , Extension Educator

Winter Care of Houseplants

If you grow your own fresh air, you appreciate the liveliness houseplants bring to the indoors during the long winter months. On days when I'm feeling blue, nothing lifts my spirits like taking care of my houseplants. Removing dead leaves, looking for any insect pests that I missed when bringing them indoors last fall, punching off leggy stems for rooting later, checking soil levels, setting aside plants that require further attention, and just plain admiring the handsome plants are some of the tasks I look forward to. If leafy plants aren't your thing, consider growing one of the hugely popular succulents now found in garden centers and online. They offer the ease of growing cacti without all the thorns that make them user-unfriendly.

Light

Unless you have a greenhouse or grow lights, keeping houseplants at their finest during the winter months can be a challenge. With sunlight intensity and duration at a low point, even the best window in the house can keep plant growth to a minimum. Pinch off stems that have gotten leggy to keep plants looking good and place the cuttings in water for rooting. These can be potted up to give away as gifts or used to dress up outdoor containers in spring.

Fertilization

With reduced growth during the winter months, a houseplant's need for nutrients drops. Unless plants have supplemental grow lights, continuing to fertilize during the winter months risks the buildup of fertilizer salts in potting soil, reaching critical levels that can kill plants. For houseplants in the window, fertilization should take place March through October, when sunlight intensity and duration promotes plant growth and vigor.

Watering

Snow melt water (allowing it to come to room temperature before using), rainwater, and water save from the AC unit last summer are great for houseplants. Water from these sources have low amounts of minerals that make water hard but do contain trace elements beneficial to plants. Well water and tap water are OK to use but have lots of minerals that can leave deposits on the soil surface. Water-softened water is harmful to houseplants and should not be used at all. The best way to water houseplants is from the top down, allowing excess water to drain into the catch dish below. Allow plants to remain in the excess water for about an hour before emptying the catch dish. The method of watering houseplants known as wicking, along with leaving drained water in catch dishes, deposits minerals and salts on soil surfaces as water evaporates. Water temperature plays a huge role in root activity, so make sure water is brought to room temperature before it is used. Never place ice cubes on the soil surface to water plants. Ice water is just above freezing and extremely injurious to plant roots.

Humidity

Misting is a great way to provide humidity around houseplants—for about 10 minutes. Once plant foliage is dry, it's back to dry air. Unless you're willing to stand there misting your plants, it will be easier to group houseplants together, so they can bask in the humidity from their fellow plant's evapotranspiration. Another technique to create humidity around plants is to set up a pebble tray. A shallow tray, wider than the plant's foliage, is filled with pebbles and enough water to just cover the pebbles. Pots are placed on the pebble layer, not directly in the water. As water evaporates, voila, humidity for plants!

Pest Management

There were several hitchhikers that came in with my houseplants when moved inside last fall. A Japanese beetle, more than several

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

Board of Directors

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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.

boxelder bugs, lots of fungus gnats, and a few ladybugs rounded out the mix. The vacuum cleaner made short clean-up of these visitors. It's the hard-to-see hitchhikers that garner more concern. Aphids, spider mites, scale, mealybugs, and whiteflies are major pests of houseplants, but they are tiny, sometimes requiring a hand lens to see them. These pests can take an otherwise healthy plant close to death in just a few months, especially when there are no insect predators to feed on them. An insecticidal soap kills most of these pests. Spray plants on a weekly basis until no more insects are seen. With scale and mealybugs, ridding plants of these species is time-consuming and has little success in long term results. Discard plants that are heavily infested. For plants with sentimental value, do a twice-weekly clean up using cotton swabs dipped in rubbing alcohol. Always keep new plants isolated from your other houseplants for a few weeks to make sure nothing is inadvertently spread to healthy plants.

Setting Houseplants Outside

In spring, when nighttime and daytime temperatures have reached 55°F and higher, houseplants can be moved outside to take advantage of the weather. Because they are weaklings from their protected time indoors, plants should be acclimated first. Start by putting them beneath the shade of a tree or a porch, out of any direct sun, wind, or precipitation. Every few days, move plants to a more exposed place, eventually moving them to a full sun location. Once plants are hardened off, they can be placed in their permanent summer location.

When you grow houseplants, you're benefitting you and your family's physical and psychological health. So...grow your own fresh air!