

BURT COUNTY

PUBLIC POWER

PO Box 209
Tekamah, NE 68061

It's Your Power!



WHY IS MY POWER OUT?

A storm or a squirrel may be to blame



When the power goes out, we work hard to resume service as quickly and safely as possible.

Here are some common reasons the power goes out:



STORMS:

Mother Nature can interfere with power delivery.



TREES AND VEGETATION:

This is why we work so hard to keep power lines clear.



ANIMALS:

Curious animals can cause damage, especially squirrels.



ACCIDENTS: Run-ins with a utility pole or other equipment can cause an outage.



PUBLIC DAMAGE: Unsafe digging, equipment or line damage, vandalism or theft can all interfere.



OVERLOAD: This happens when demand spikes, like on a hot summer day.



EQUIPMENT ISSUES: We maintain and inspect equipment regularly, but sometimes malfunctions occur.

Thank you for your patience during outages.

Burt's Briefs

Holiday Closing. Our office will be closed Wednesday, January 1st 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 season 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.

Stay Safe at Work

Employers usually offer orientation and training for new employees, but sometimes electrical safety is overlooked. Beyond burning popcorn in the microwave and annoying all your coworkers with the stench, **Burt County Public Power District** and **Safe Electricity** remind you of the following on-the-job electrical safety tips, which can also apply at home:

IN GENERAL

1. Do not complete electrical work if you are not qualified. Employees asked to change light fixtures, repair wiring, install outlets or other types of electrical work have been injured and killed on the job. It is best to leave electrical work to a professional electrician.

INDOORS

1. Many offices have landlines. Do not talk on a landline phone during a thunderstorm. Many people think this is a myth but it is not — a bolt of lightning that strikes a telephone line can come through the wires and enter a headset. That jolt can burst your eardrum or even cause cardiac arrest.
2. Use high quality extension cords with appropriate gauge and length endorsed by a reputable laboratory.
3. Do not run extension cords under carpet. Out of sight, out of mind, and the cords could get damaged under the carpet or overheat, causing a fire.
4. Another reason not to place extension cords under carpet: they should be used as a temporary solution. If your workplace needs more outlets, your employer should have a professional electrician install them.
5. Electrical cords can be a tripping hazard; your employer should supply heavy duty cord covers.
6. Do not overload the electrical system at your work by plugging too many items in or plugging in items that draw too much power.
7. Speaking of drawing too much power, ask before using a space heater at work.
8. Do not use damaged cords, plugs, outlets or outdated electrical equipment.
9. Do not yank on an electrical cord to unplug something; grasp the plug instead.

OUTDOORS

1. If you are doing work outdoors, be vigilant about power line locations. Window washers, roofers, painters and other workers have been injured and killed after making contact with power lines either with a tool or object they were holding or by direct contact.
2. If your employer asks you to trim trees, do not trim any foliage or limbs within 10 feet of a power line in any direction (20 feet is better!). Trimming near power lines should be left to OSHA-certified line clearance workers.
3. If you operate farm machinery or drive a truck that has hydraulic beds or lifts (dump truck, for example), bins (grain truck) or arms/extensions (garbage truck, concrete truck), always be aware of power line locations and use a spotter. Contact with a power line can kill. If your truck, tractor or equipment does come in contact with a line, **DO NOT** get out. Call 9-1-1 and wait for us to de-energize the power so you can safely exit.
4. If you rent/use scaffolding or a boom lift to raise you up, always be aware of power line locations.

AROUND WATER

1. Be careful when working around water. Water and electricity should not mix and it greatly increases the chance of shock. Keep all electrical equipment away from standing water or damp conditions (indoors or outdoors) and do not operate equipment with wet hands.
2. Make sure any outlet that is near a water source (and all outdoor outlets) are GFCI (ground-fault circuit interrupter) protected.

If you have questions about electrical safety at work, contact **Zach Olson** at **Burt County Public Power District** at **402-374-2631**. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



Old Electronics Deserve a Proper Burial

WAIT! Before you give your outdated or dilapidated electronics the heave-ho, consider this earth-friendly advice from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):

Consider recycling

Electronics are made from metals, plastics and glass that require energy and time to reproduce. For example, according to the EPA:

- Recycling one million laptops saves the energy equivalent to the electricity used by more than 3,500 U.S. homes in a year.
- For every million cell phones we recycle, 35 thousand pounds of copper, 772 pounds of silver, 75 pounds of gold and 33 pounds of palladium can be recovered.

Before you donate or recycle

Can you upgrade the hardware or software on your current computer to extend its life? If the answer is no and you ultimately decide to get rid of a computer or other device, destroy all personal information from the device first. Also, remove any batteries from your electronics for separate recycling.

Where to donate or recycle

Several manufacturers and local and national retailers offer donation or recycling options. The EPA's **Sustainable Materials Management** (SMM) tracks and publicizes participants, and major companies include Best Buy, Dell, Sprint, Sony and Vizio. SMM participants strive to send 100 percent of used electronics they collect to certified recyclers.

For more information about recycling electronics, refer to EPA's website and other reputable sources. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



Don't Let Old Electrical Wiring Pose a Problem

People who love older homes usually get drawn in by their grandeur. They see a Victorian home in the historic district and fall in love with its stately staircase and intricate architectural features. Once they sign on the dotted line, they painstakingly restore woodwork, make sure windows are in working order and tend to other repairs. One of the top priorities on their "To Do" list should be to get the electrical system inspected by a qualified electrician.

Just because the wiring in a home is old doesn't automatically mean there's a problem, but there could be. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), many older homes that still have outdated wiring can't handle the electrical load of today's modern appliances. That's not good because old, outdated wiring could pose a fire hazard.

As electrical components age or become overloaded, the system can overheat and wear out insulation. This can lead to arcs (electrical discharge) and short circuits — the two main causes of home electrical wiring fires, according to the CPSC. In addition, old rubber wire insulation can become brittle and easily flake, leaving wires exposed.

Older wiring called knob and tube can be found in homes built around 1950 or earlier. If your electrical system was not thoroughly inspected when you bought it, or if it was inspected but it has been several years, have it inspected by an electrician to make sure it is safe and that it adequately meets the electrical needs of your home.

If your house was built between 1965 and 1973, it could be dangerous for another reason. Aluminum is great for cans, but not for wiring since it can overheat. Unfortunately, it was used in 2 million homes that were built during that time period.

Regardless of the age of your home, be sure to get any potentially dangerous wiring issues checked out by a professional, especially if:

- Your circuit breaker keeps tripping or fuses blow often
- You notice unusual power draws or dimming or flickering lights
- You see discolored (dark colored) outlets or switch plates or they are warm to the touch
- You notice unusual odors like a burning smell but can't find a source
- Your outlets only allow you to plug in a two-pronged plug (and not a three-pronged plug), which means they are not grounded
- You don't have ground-fault circuit interrupters near faucets or other sources of water in your home
- Your house was built more than 40 years ago

For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Nebraska Extension News

By John Wilson , Extension Educator

“So Long, Farewell, Auf Wiedersehen, Adieu...”

You “youngsters” out there might wonder what in the world the title of this article has to do with anything (you’ve probably wondered that more than once! LOL), but those “Baby Boomers” will immediately recognize that as a line from a song in the movie, The Sound of Music. The lyrics also include the line, “*Regretfully they tell us, but firmly they compel us, to say good bye... to you.*”

By the time you read this (I wrote this over a month ago) I will have completed 42 years in the Nebraska Extension office in Burt County, will be retired, and I’ll be looking forward to whatever the next chapter in my life might bring. The uncertainty brings a little anxiety, but a lot more anticipation of what I’ll be doing in the future... other than trying to stay out of the way of my successor and hiding from my wife and her “Honey Do” list.

Looking back, it’s hard to believe that 42 years has passed so quickly, but I think what has helped make it go fast is all of the great people I’ve had the opportunity to work with. There isn’t enough room on this page to begin to recognize all those people... but a perfect example is Burt County Public Power, who offered me this space to share timely information and promote upcoming educational programs, and Kathy Beaty for facilitating this.

Around the 20th of each month I’d get an email from Kathy saying “*John, I’d like your column by a certain date.*” Then on that date, or the day after, I’d get another email saying, “*John, did you forget me?*” or “*John, were you going to have an article this month?*” Kathy has been great to work with, even when I’d give her a bad time about the spacing she used to plant potatoes in her garden. (Hint: Six inches apart in the row and six inches between rows might be a little too close! – I sure hope she doesn’t edit this out!)

So I want to say “Good Bye!” to all my friends out there who our paths have crossed one way or another over the years. I’ve enjoyed working with each and every one of you. Until my position is filled, Extension Educators from neighboring counties will be covering for me, just as I’ve covered for others when there was a vacancy. Your best bet is still to call our office at 402.374.2929 and Sharon, Mary or Carroll will put you in contact with the best person to answer your question.

I also hope everyone will give my successor all the cooperation you gave me. He or she may not do things exactly the same, but it wouldn’t surprise me (or hurt my feelings) to hear someone comment, “*They had a really great idea, I wonder why Wilson never thought of that!*” Each person has their own expertise and I’m sure the new person will have some great ideas on bringing you timely educational information from the University of Nebraska.

So with my remaining space, I want to remind folks about what I considered one of the best crops programs 42 years ago and I still do today. Crop Production Clinics (originally Crop Protection Clinics) are a series of meeting held across the state and tailored for the particular location with the latest information on soil fertility, irrigation, insects, weeds, plant diseases, and cropping systems.

In addition, private pesticide applicators... and commercial and non-commercial applicators in the ag plant, demonstration & research, and regulatory categories... can be recertified by attending. Another benefit for Certified Crop Advisors (CCAs) is they can receive ceus needed to maintain their certification.

The closest locations will be at the Lifelong Learning Center in Norfolk on Monday, January 13, and the Eastern Nebraska Research & Extension Center (ARDC) near Mead on Wednesday, January 15. At both locations, registration will start at 8:00 a.m. and the program at 9:00 a.m. More information and the complete program for each

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

Gerald Bohling
Michael J. Chatt
Michael R. Williams
Greg Johnson
Dwane Piere
Scott Lindstrom
Jonathon Dockhorn
RVW, Inc.
Blankenau Wilmoth LLP

President
Vice President
Treasurer
Secretary
Director
Director
Manager
Engineer
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.

location can be found at <https://agronomy.unl.edu/cpc>.

You can also preregister on this website at a lower registration fee than is offered at the door. Your registration fee includes refreshments, lunch, and the 2020 Guide for Weed, Disease, and Insect Management in Nebraska. You will also have the opportunity to visit one-on-one with the experts if all of your questions were not answered during the presentations.

Don’t miss out on this program. If I had to pick one program for crop farmers to attend, this would be the one. Also, this is the year when the majority of our private pesticide applicators need to be recertified so this gives you the chance to get some great information AND get your license renewed for another three years, all at once.

For more information on the Crop Production Clinics, pesticide applicator recertification, or other agronomic questions, contact your local Nebraska Extension office. Just realize, you won’t be talking to me... and you may be referred to one of my co-workers in another county until my position is filled! Thanks to everyone and until we

