

BURT COUNTY

PUBLIC POWER

PO Box 209
Tekamah, NE 68061

It's Your Power!



SIX HELPFUL TIPS

WHEN THE POWER GOES OUT...

- 1** Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Generators, camp stoves, or charcoal grills should be used outside and at least 20 feet away from windows.
- 2** Plan ahead before an outage occurs: Have alternate plans for refrigerating medicines, using power-dependent medical devices and charging cell phones.
- 3** Check on your neighbors if you can. Older adults and young children are especially vulnerable to extreme temperatures.
- 4** Go to another location with power if heat or cold is extreme and if conditions are safe to do so.
- 5** Keep refrigerators and freezers closed to maintain temperatures in the appliances for as long as possible. Once the power is back on, when in doubt, throw food out.
- 6** Turn off or disconnect appliances, electronics or other electrical equipment. Power may return with momentary surges or spikes that can cause damage.

Learn more at  **Safe Electricity.org**

Burt's Briefs

Holiday Closing. Our office will be closed Thursday, November 28th and Friday, November 29th in recognition of Thanksgiving. In case of emergency, please call our toll free number 1-888-835-1620. Thank you!

Changing Address. If you are on the move, please be sure to let us know. You will be responsible for the electric bill until we are notified.

"Ground" Your Tractor. A tractor outfitted with an engine heater can be shorted out. When the operator touches the tractor, he becomes the ground path. Be sure you use a drop cord with three conductors, and be sure that the ground prong is left intact. A ground fault interrupter outlet would be added protection.

Tank Heater Maintenance. If you use electric stock tank heaters, they could be a source of abnormally high winter electric bills if they are not properly maintained.

1. Check thermostats to make sure they work. Replace old units.
2. Check temperature settings periodically.
3. Make sure the insulation is still effective.
4. Check for water leaks.

Is Your Stand-by Generator Standing By?

If anything can go wrong it will. Store the generator in a clean assessable place so you're ready for that emergency. Make sure you have a transfer switch that's working properly before you connect your generator.

Save Some Green on Energy Bills This Winter

How can you save on heating costs this winter?

Some answers to that question are basic: turn down the thermostat a few degrees from where you would normally keep it and dress in layers. Keep your feet warm and have plenty of extra blankets around.

Most people like to pull up the covers at night when it's cold outside. Add extra blankets, use flannel sheets and a thick comforter so that you can turn down your thermostat while you sleep. It also helps to use insulated or lined curtains to keep the cold air out; not only in your bedroom, but throughout your home.

Other energy-saving tips include:

- Get your heating system regularly maintained and serviced by a HVAC professional so that it is working at peak efficiency. Keep your furnace clean, and change the filter monthly.
- Regularly vacuum or clean vents.
- If you have a fireplace, keep the damper closed when not in use. If you do not use your fireplace, plug and seal the flume.
- Do not heat an empty home. A programmable or smart thermostat can help this become automatic. According to the Department of Energy, lowering the temperature by 7 to 10 degrees for 8 hours a day can reduce energy costs by up to 10 percent.
- A leaky house is expensive to heat. According to Energy.gov, sealing uncontrolled air leaks can save from \$83 to \$166 a year. Weather stripping double-hung windows can save \$42 to \$86 annually. Windows, doors, attics, attic access, outlets, walls and chimneys, as well as pipes entering or exiting your home are common sources of air leaks.
- Let sunshine in your home during the day to use Mother Nature's warmth. Close window coverings after dusk, however, to reduce heat loss.
- Run your ceiling fans in a clockwise direction. Doing so will push down and redistribute warm air that naturally rises.
- Consider turning down your water heater to 120 or 125°F. Also install a water heater blanket to help insulate it to give it a step up in warming your water.
- When it comes time to replace your furnace or any part of your HVAC system, consider replacing it with an energy efficient version by looking for the EnergyStar designation.
- Decrease the use of the built-in ventilation fans in your kitchen and bathrooms. In the colder months, they do a good job of transferring heat from inside your home to the backyard. Use the fans only when needed and turn them off as soon as you can.
- Bring in the moisture with a humidifier or research other ways to do that (e.g. well-watered plants, containers of water throughout the home). Dry air makes the air feel colder and increasing moisture in the air causes indoor air to retain more heat.

There She Blows: Make Sure Your Hot Water Heater is Safe

One home appliance that seldom gets much of a thought or even a passing glance is the hot water heater. However, neglecting the appliance that we depend on to turn cold water into hot can cause serious havoc.

You may only notice issues with this underappreciated appliance at the prospect of a cold shower, but a hot water heater that's improperly installed or maintained could cause much more serious consequences than that.

Once it blows, it could blast off like a missile with enough force to lift your house off its foundation. Or, you could be sitting on the couch binge watching Netflix when suddenly it bursts and your ceiling caves in (depending on its location) and you have an instant flood and massive mess on your hands.

A hot water heater could explode or malfunction for the following reasons:

1. Sediment buildup in the tank
2. Rust corroding the tank; or
3. Too much internal pressure

How will you know if your heater suffers from one of these maladies?

If your hot water makes a popping or knocking noise, there could be water trapped under the sediment. It is similar to when you boil water and it puts pressure on the lid from the inside out. To prevent this from happening, flush and drain your hot water heater tank once every year.

If your tap water is a brown, rusty color, you may have rust in the water tank. Although hot water heaters have something called an anode rod to prevent this, it can deteriorate over time. Be sure to inspect the rod every two years and at least annually once your warranty has expired. The rod itself should be replaced every four to five years; sooner if you have a water softener.

If your hot water heater's temperature and pressure relief valve (aka T&P) keeps opening to release water or it leaks (a sign that your valve is bad), you could have a potential bomb-projectile combo on your hands. To help prevent too much pressure in your tank:

1. Set the temperature at 120 to 125 degrees. Setting it too high (140+ degrees) causes pressure to build in the tank. (Additional benefit: this will help lower your energy bill.)
2. Test your T&P twice a year (or have it tested by a professional) to make sure it is working properly. You can find the valve on the top or side of your tank (be careful—the water will be extremely hot; it is not like the sink or shower when you wait for hot water to make its way through the pipes).

For additional information, consult a qualified service technician. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



What Are GFCIs and Are They Required Outdoors?

Did you know that ground-fault circuit interrupter or GFCI protection is required for all outdoor outlets, which are also known as outdoor receptacles?

The National Electric Code (NEC) began requiring GFCI installation on all outdoor outlets in 1975. Today, that rule stands with one uncommon exception—when homeowners have what is called a dedicated branch circuit for outdoor outlets.

GFCIs serve as important electrical system protection since they automatically trip as soon as anything goes wrong in a circuit. When working properly, they keep us from getting shocked or electrocuted. This is especially important around the home where

water and electricity have the chance to mix, such as in bathrooms, basements, kitchens, garages, and of course, outdoors.

If you are planning a new outdoor space (or a remodel in any area of your home) that requires additional outlets, consult a licensed electrician. Outdoor outlets must be installed in outdoor-rated electrical boxes and must have special covers based on their type and location, among other requirements.

If you are still not convinced about the importance of GFCIs, consider this easy-to-understand explanation by This Old House: A ground fault happens whenever electricity escapes the confines of the wiring in an appliance, light fixture, or power tool and takes a shortcut to the ground. When that shortcut is through a human, the results can be deadly. About 20 people in the U.S. alone die of ground faults each year, accounting for two-thirds of all electrocutions occurring in homes.

...The ground fault circuit interrupter (was invented) in 1961. Most of the time, (the) invention does nothing; it just monitors the difference in the current flowing into and out of a tool or appliance. But when that difference exceeds 5 milliamps, an indication that a ground fault may be occurring, the GFCI shuts off the flow in an instant—as little as .025 seconds.

So with the advent of the GFCI, how do people become electrocuted by ground faults? Probably for one of several reasons:

- Their GFCIs are not working properly. Test GFCIs monthly to make sure they are working and if not, have new ones installed.
- They live in an older home built prior to GFCI requirements or in a dwelling that is not up to code.
- They took on an electrical DIY project and were not qualified to do so.

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

DANGER!

NEVER place hunting stands on or near **utility poles or equipment.**

 Safe Electricity.org

Nebraska Extension News

By John Wilson , Extension Educator

Fall Post-Harvest Task

Hopefully harvest is wrapping up as you're reading this. It's a sense of accomplishment to complete the cropping year with what looks like some excellent yields... except where there were large areas that didn't get planted or planted late because it was too wet last spring. This is a great time of year to do a few things to make 2020 another successful year.

First, make permanent repairs on any equipment you fixed "good enough" to get you through harvest, but not quite as good as it could have been. Also, clean grain harvesting and handling equipment to remove any dust and dirt, crop residue, and residual grain. This includes combines, grain carts, augers, etc. Removing grain from equipment greatly reduces the chances of introducing grain feeding insects in the crop you harvest next year.

Second, after harvest is an excellent time to check your fields for soybean cyst nematodes, SCN. This is the most devastating pest in soybeans and causes more yield losses than all other soybean diseases combined! The worst thing about SCN is, these losses usually come on health appearing plants. You can sample for this pest any time of year, but the majority of sampling usually occurs after harvest for several reasons.

*Your yield maps show or your observations during harvest tell you where lower yielding fields, or parts of fields, were that you can't explain by other reasons... compaction, flooding, soil type, weed, insect or disease pressure or a variety of other reasons. This is often the first sign that SCN is in a field. Soybean yields hit a plateau or even start to drop off while corn yields continue to increase in the field.

*After harvest is generally a slower time of year that allows you to collect and have soil samples analyzed for the presence of SCN.

*Often co-ops, crop consultants, field scouts, or other agronomists are collecting soil samples for next year's fertilizer recommendations. Talking real nice to whoever might be soil sampling your fields to take a few more cores, mixing them all together, then send half of the sample in for fertility analysis and the other half for SCN analysis can save you a lot of time on the end of a soil probe.

*People often ask if it is better to sample a field coming out of soybeans or corn for SCN analysis. There is no right or wrong answer to this question. By sampling following corn, you know if it is present and can select resistant varieties when placing your seed order for next year. On the other hand, if you don't know if it is present, it will be easier to detect it if it is present following soybeans.

*What is true for either situation is the Nebraska Soybean Board has partnered with Nebraska Extension to provide free (normally \$20/sample) analysis for SCN. Bags to submit these samples are available at your local Nebraska Extension office. If you drop off the bags at the Nebraska Extension office in Tekamah, we'll even deliver the samples to Lincoln next time one of us is going down, saving you the postage for mailing in the samples.

Finally, when harvest is over, it's easy to shut the doors on grain bins and breathe a sigh of relief. But it's not really over, on-

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

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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.

farm stored grain should be checked every two weeks throughout winter and every week in warmer weather. You should monitor grain moisture, mold, odor, and insect activity.

If grain is at the correct moisture level and aerated to maintain temperatures between 35 and 40°F, mold and insect activity should not be a problem. The length of the storage period will determine the correct moisture level for safe storage. Maximum moisture level for properly managed, aerated grain:

Storage Period	Corn	Soybeans
Fed or sold by April	18.0%	13.0%
Fed or sold by June	15.5%	13.0%
Stored up to one year	14.0%	12.0%
Stored over one year	13.0%	11.0%

Remember to keep fans running on grain bins until the grain reaches the proper moisture level AND temperature. We need to cool the grain in the bin so it is within 10 degrees of the average outside temperature. Cool grain until it is about 35 to 40°F.

Throughout winter, bin-stored grain should be cold enough so insect activity is not present. Insects found during winter are an indicator of more serious problems... warm grain, high moisture, and possible mold activity. Using a 10-foot or longer probe, take a dozen samples from each bin. Examine the grain samples for insects and mold while also testing the temperature and moisture of the grain.

Exercise caution when entering a bin. Suffocation can occur from wet grain that produced carbon dioxide or from falling through a grain bridge that can collapse under weight. Use safety harnesses, lifelines or rope grabs and have someone that stays outside when you enter a bin.