

Safety Checklist: Check the Items on This List Created By the National Electrical Safety Foundation



- Outlets:** Check for outlets that have loose-fitting plugs, which can overheat and lead to fire. Replace any broken or missing wall plates. Make sure there are safety covers on all unused outlets that are accessible to children.
- Cords:** Make sure cords are in good conditions- not frayed or cracked. Make sure they are placed out of traffic areas. Cords should never be nailed or stapled to the wall, baseboard, or to another object. Do not place cords under carpets or rugs or rest any furniture on them.
- Extension Cords:** Check to see that cords are not overloaded. Additionally, extension cords should only be used on a temporary basis; they are not intended as permanent household wiring. Make sure extension cords have safety closures to help prevent young children from shock hazards and mouth burn injuries.
- Plugs:** Make sure your plugs fit your outlets. Never remove the ground pin (the third prong) to make a three-prong fit a two-conductor outlet; this could lead to an electrical shock. NEVER FORCE A PLUG INTO AN OUTLET IF IT DOESN'T FIT. Plugs should fit securely into outlets. Avoid overloading outlets with too many appliances.
- Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs):** GFCIs can help prevent electrocution. They should be used in any area where water and electricity may come into contact. When a GFCI senses current leakage in an electrical circuit, it assumes a ground fault has occurred. It then interrupts power fast enough to help prevent serious injury from electrical shock. Test GFCIs regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions to make sure they are working properly.
- Light Bulbs:** Check the wattage of all bulbs in light fixtures to make sure they are the correct wattage for the size of the fixture. Replace bulbs that have higher wattage than recommended; if you don't know the correct wattage, check with the manufacturer of the fixture. Make sure bulbs are screwed in securely; loose bulbs may overheat.
- Circuit Breakers/Fuses:** Circuit Breakers and fuses should be the correct size current rating for their circuit. If you do not know the correct size, have an electrician identify and label the size to be used. Always replace a fuse with the same size fuse.
- Appliances:** If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker, or if it has given you a shock, unplug it and have it repaired or replaced.
- Entertainment/Computer Equipment:** Check to see that the equipment is in good condition and working properly; look for cracks or damage in wiring, plugs, and connectors. Use a surge protector bearing the seal of a nationally recognized certification agency. Information about VEC's surge protection program is available at www.vec.org.
- Lightning:** During an electrical storm, do not use appliances (i.e., hairdryers, toasters, and radios) or telephones (except in an emergency); do not take a bath or shower; keep batteries on hand for flashlights and radios in case of a power outage; and use surge protectors on electronic devices and appliances. Information about VEC's surge protection program is available at www.vec.org.
- Space Heaters:** Space heaters are meant to supply supplemental heat. Keep space heaters at least 3 ft. away from any combustible materials such as bedding, clothing, draperies, furniture, and rugs. Don't use in rooms where children are unsupervised and remember to turn off and unplug when not in use.
- Halogen Floor Lamps:** Halogen floor lamps operate at much higher temperatures than standard incandescent and compact fluorescent light bulbs. Never place a halogen floor lamp where it could come in contact with draperies, clothing, or other combustible materials. Be sure to turn the lamp off whenever you leave the room for an extended period of time and never use torchiere lamps in children's bedrooms or playrooms.

Project Deserve Needs You

Volunteer Energy Cooperative's Project Deserve program allows you to help the elderly, handicapped, low income and unemployed with their electric bills in emergency situations. You can do this by pledging a specified amount of money to be added to your monthly bill.

All funds collected through Project Deserve go directly to a fund. No funds will be used to administer the program. Eligibility may be determined by human resource agencies and/or community relief groups in VEC's 17-county service area. Eligibility may also depend upon available funds.

Winter weather is upon us, and this is the time of year when more families ask Project Deserve for assistance with their electric bill. Your contribution to Project Deserve will help these families in their time of emergency.

You may contribute monthly or you may make a one-time contribution. One-time contributions should be mailed to Project Deserve, P.O. Box 277, Decatur, TN 37322. Should you ever wish to cancel your monthly Project Deserve contribution, you can do so by contacting your local VEC customer service center.



VEC Offers College Scholarships

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) wants to reward students who have used their time and talents to benefit their local communities. VEC's Lillard-Shadow scholarship program rewards academic and community service achievements by awarding four \$2,000 scholarships to students who will graduate from high schools in VEC's service area in the spring of 2013.

The scholarships honor J.W. Lillard and Willis A Shadow, two community leaders who spearheaded efforts to bring electric power to Decatur and Meigs County in the 1930s, forming the organization that would become Volunteer Energy Cooperative. Mr. Shadow and Mr. Lillard were instrumental in improving the lives and livelihoods of thousands of residents through electric power.

Four awards of \$500 per semester each (renewable for up to four semesters) will be presented to spring 2013 high school graduates whose parents or guardians are VEC electric customers. Applications will be judged by an independent panel based on each student's community service activities and citizenship - 40%; written communication skills - 20%; financial need - 25%; and academic achievement - 15%.

Scholarship applications are available at any VEC Customer Service Center or from high school counselors in the VEC service area. Applications are also available online at www.vec.org.

All application materials must be completed and delivered to VEC's Corporate Office in Decatur no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Time on March 7, 2014.

EVERY DEGREE COUNTS IN CUTTING ENERGY COSTS

Winter is here and lowering your thermostat by one or two degrees can mean substantial savings on your heating bill.

On average, each degree you raise or lower the thermostat from 70 degrees means you pay 3.1% more or less on your heating bill.

For example, lowering your thermostat from 70 degrees to 68 degrees will save 6.2% on your heating bill. However, if you like to keep your home warmer in the winter; raising the thermostat to 76 degrees will increase your heating bill by 18.6%.

When Temperatures Go Down, Electric Bills Can Go Up Use These Tips to Keep the Lid on Your Electric Bill This Winter

Keeping electric bills under control during cold weather is possible. If you are willing to develop some good energy-saving habits this winter, you can save money, save energy and still remain comfortable.

If you heat your home with an energy-efficient heat pump, you're already halfway there. If you use another type of heating system or one that is more than 15 years old, consider replacing it with a new energy-saving heat pump. Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) can help with TVA's *energy right*® heat pump financing program. Phone Kristy Kelly at 423-334-7055 for more information or go to www.vec.org.

You can also take advantage of VEC's free In-Home Energy Evaluation program. We'll send an energy-efficiency expert to your home and make recommendations about how you can save money on your electric bill. If you choose to make any of the recommended improvements, you can earn rebates of up to \$500 on the work you have done. Call Paige Finnell at 423-334-7053 for more information or visit our website at www.vec.org.

Another great way to battle electric bills that spike in extremely cold or extremely hot weather is to sign up for VEC's Levelized Billing option. Levelized Billing means no big swings in your electric bill. It takes the guesswork out of your household budget. Contact your local VEC Customer Service Center for more information or apply online at www.vec.org.

Here are some tips on how to keep from wasting energy and money this winter:

■ If you haven't replaced your heating system's air filter in the last month, do it now. A dirty filter will reduce air flow which makes your system work harder. Also, cover the filter slot with a piece of wide tape to keep air from getting in around filter edges without passing through the filter.

■ Be sure your ducts are delivering all the warm air they can. If you can see the duct seams where the metal comes together, seal these joints with shiny foil tape or duct mastic (also called duct sealant).

■ You can also take off the duct registers in your rooms (usually all you need to do is back out two screws) and check the connection between the duct and the drywall. You may see a gap. This gap allows heated air to escape into the walls. Fill this gap with duct mastic. Also, with the register off, check for any other gaps that would allow heated air to flow behind walls. If there is a gap or a hole, seal it up.

■ If you have any ducts that run through the attic or through a cold basement or crawlspace, be sure the ducts are well insulated. If the insulation is missing or falling off, replace it. Most home improvement stores sell insulation for ducts. Try to insulate to at least an R-6. Be sure to seal any leaks in the ducts first, then wrap the duct in insulation. If you have flex-duct (shiny metal flexible duct tubes), be sure there are no rips or tears and the ducts are as straight as possible.

■ You can also prevent heat loss by sealing air leaks around window and door frames with caulk or weather stripping.

■ Keep shades and curtains open during the day so the sun can help make your home warmer. Close them in the evening to keep the heat in.

■ Use ceiling fans to circulate the warmer air found near the ceiling throughout your home.

■ Consider installing glass doors in front of your fireplace to prevent heated air from escaping up the chimney. Always keep the fireplace damper closed when the fireplace is not in use.

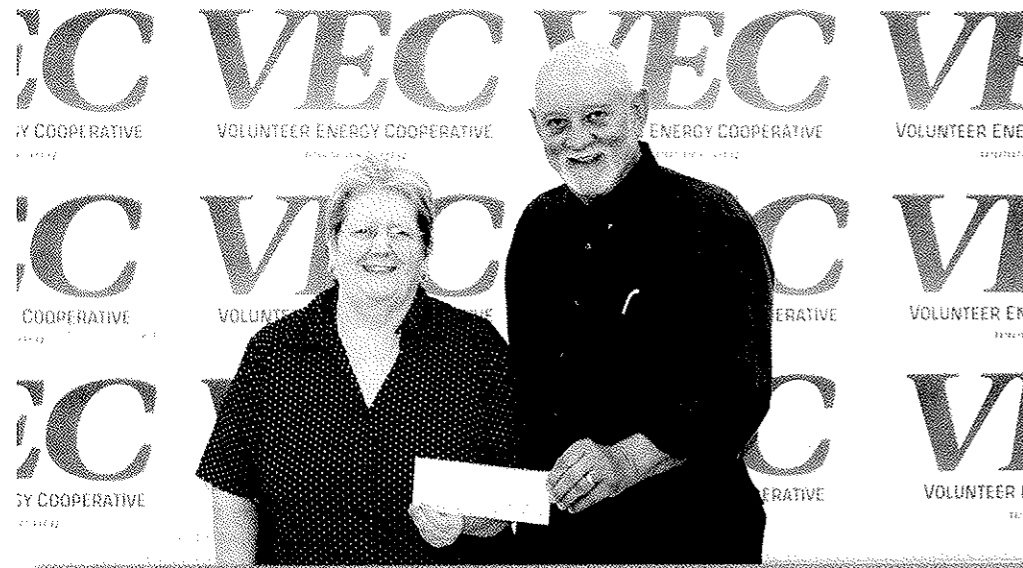
■ Be sure to turn off bathroom and kitchen vent fans when their work is done.

■ Remove window air conditioning units in the winter. If this can't be done, enclose the unit with an air conditioner cover to prevent drafts.

VECcustomers Share Your Change Changes Things



The VECcustomers Share program funded \$29,800 in community service grants in September. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, more than \$4.7 million in grants has been awarded. The deadline for grant applications is the last day of each month. For additional information, contact the office of Marketing and Economic Development, at 423-334-7051. Applications are also available online, at www.vec.org.



VECcustomers Share Board Member Jim Taylor, right, presents a grant check to Kathy Goad, director of the Fentress County Library.

Organizations receiving grants in October

Stone Memorial High Wrestling Boosters, Crossville	\$100	Pickett County Farmers' Market, Byrdstown	\$500
Midway High Anchor Club, Kingston	\$150	Cumberland Adult Reading Council, Crossville	\$500
McMinn County Senior Citizens, Inc., Athens	\$250	Christian Counseling Center of Cumberland County, Crossville	\$500
South Cumberland Elementary PTO, Crossville	\$250	Youth Achievement Foundation, Inc., Crossville	\$500
MARA Medical Ministry, Crossville	\$250	Kids on the Rise, Crossville	\$600
God Spot Block Party, Decatur	\$250	Muddy Pond Volunteer Fire Department, Monterey	\$750
Pickett County High School Basketball Booster Club, Byrdstown	\$250	Meigs Middle PTO, Decatur	\$750
Standing Stone Historical Society, Monterey	\$250	Meigs High School Health Occupations Students of American, Decatur	\$750
Performing Arts Alliance of Rural Tennessee - PAART, Crossville	\$250	Ooltewah High School Diamond Club, Ooltewah	\$750
Cherokee Removal Memorial, Birchwood	\$250	Hospice of Cumberland County, Crossville	\$750
Pickett County Veterans Service Office, Byrdstown	\$300	Standing Stone VFW Post 6277, Monterey	\$750
Midway High School PTO, Kingston	\$350	Homestead Elementary PTO, Crossville	\$800
First Baptist Church Team Kids Fall Festival, Spring City	\$400	Polk County Baptist Association Food Bank, Benton	\$900
Chilhowee Middle Softball Booster Club, Benton	\$400	Muscular Dystrophy Association, Nashville	\$1,000
BASIC of TN, Inc., Birchwood	\$500	Wilson Elementary Journalism Club, Crawford	\$1,000
Meigs County FFA Alumni, Decatur	\$500	Fentress County Public Library, Jamestown	\$1,000
For the Children Quilting Ministry, Crossville	\$500	Toys for Children, Spring City	\$1,000
Pickett County High Lady Bobcats Parents Support Group, Byrdstown	\$500	Tyner Soccer Boosters, Chattanooga	\$1,000
Tribe Rugby Football Club (TRFC), Athens	\$500	Polk County High School Golf Booster Club, Benton	\$1,200
Byrdstown Headstart, Byrdstown	\$500	Rhea County Veterans Coordinating Committee, Spring City	1,350
Meigs County-Decatur Chamber of Commerce, Decatur	\$500	McMinn County Foster Care Association, Athens	1,500
Pickett County K-8 Jr. High Book Club, Byrdstown	\$500	Clarkrange High School Band Boosters, Clarkrange	\$1,750
Stone Memorial High School Panther Rocket Club, Crossville	\$500	Operation REACH, Kingston	\$2,000

An Eventful and Productive Year is Drawing to a Close

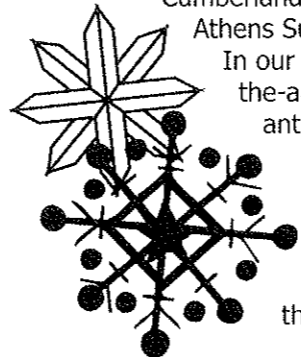
The beginning of a new calendar year is a good opportunity time to look back and evaluate the previous year and 2013 was a busy year for Volunteer Energy Cooperative.

As the year drew to a close, we surpassed 112,000 meters served. The continued growth of your electric cooperative and the diversity of the members we serve means that we are constantly looking for opportunities to meet the individual needs of individual members as well as provide for the fitness of the entire electric distribution system.

During the year we addressed the overall system with a number of upgrades and improvements to the system and put a great deal of effort into maintaining the reliability of the system.

In the fall of 2013 we began construction of a new substation in the Georgetown area of Hamilton County and we anticipate energizing the new substation in the fall of 2014. We also continued work on a new substation in the Grimsley area of Fentress County and anticipate energizing that substation in December of 2014.

VEC completed major upgrades to the Lantana Substation in Cumberland County in June and two key improvements at the North Athens Substation in McMinn County were made in July and September. In our Central Dispatch and Control Center we installed a state-of-the-art weather monitoring system that allows our dispatchers to anticipate problems before they happen.



The system, "weatherTAPpro's Radar Lab HD" gives dispatchers a wealth of localized information including wind speed, wind direction and rotation, lightning strikes, as well as precipitation types and amounts. It helps get personnel and equipment in position to respond as quickly as possible in the event of an outage.

We also continued our aggressive right-of-way maintenance program and pole inspection programs along our 9,000 miles of power lines. VEC trimmed more than 2,000 miles of right-of-way during the year and inspected more than 12,000 poles in an effort to prevent outages before they occur.

We also made tremendous efforts to listen to our individual customers and respond to their unique needs.

We upgraded our website at www.vec.org in order to provide more functionality to those who use mobile devices. We also provided more than three-quarters of a million dollars in Energy Efficiency and Demand Reduction incentives to individual customers.

In an effort to help our residential customers keep their electric bills as low as possible we conducted more than 600 free In-Home Energy Evaluations in 2013.

The year also brought challenges. Changes in the way TVA bills us means that we are now sending more than 80 cents out of every dollar we collect to TVA to pay for electricity. That leaves us with under 20 cents out of every dollar to maintain our system and serve our members.

It makes our job a little more challenging but we are just as determined as ever to tackle 2014 with the same determination to serve our members as reliably and as economically as possible.

While 2013 has been a challenging year, it has also been a rewarding year. We are approaching 2014 with optimism and as determined as ever to provide our members with the best possible service at the lowest possible price.

All of us at VEC would like to wish you and your family a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year.



Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy
Cooperative

Use Emergency Generators Carefully

You can use a portable emergency generator to supply electricity to your appliances if an emergency exists during a power outage. But, if used improperly, they can kill you and the people who are working to restore power. They can also damage the appliances you connect.

Home emergency generators are usually powered by gasoline, which must be properly handled as well.

Connecting a generator to the main electrical supply for your house requires the services of a qualified, licensed electrician. **Before connecting the generator to your household circuit, notify your local VEC Customer Service Center.**

If you connect an emergency generator to the main electrical supply coming into the house, the electrical generator could feed back into Volunteer Energy Cooperative's system and electrocute workers who are repairing the electrical lines.

Determining Wattage Requirements

You must also never exceed the rated capacity of your generator. Overloading can cause serious damage to the generator or appliances. Before operating a generator, list all of the appliances that are going to operate at the same time. Then determine the starting wattage requirements and the running wattage requirements. The starting load lasts only a few seconds, but is very important when figuring your total wattage to be used. Your generator must be rated to handle the total wattage.

Extension Cords

When using an appliance or tool at a considerable distance from the generator, a 3-wire extension cord that has a 3-prong grounding plug and a 3-slot receptacle that accepts the tool's plug should be used. A cord of adequate size must be used.

Under no circumstances should an extension cord be run from one house to another.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is the recipient of federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture which provide that no person in the United States on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or disability shall be excluded from participation in, admission or access to, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs or activities.

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is Rody Blevins, President/CEO. Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels this organization has subjected them to discrimination may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above from and/or file a written complaint with this organization; or the Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250; or the Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, Washington, D.C. 20250. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discrimination. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment

Effective December 1, 2013

2.161¢

For the most current FCA information, visit www.vec.org

