

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.

120v
7500w
10000w
240v
4500w

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.



VEC Wants to Help You Save Money on Your Electric Bill

Rody Blevins is President/CEO of Volunteer Energy Cooperative

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) customers who have been considering spending \$150 or more on money-saving improvements to their homes, can get rebates and free in-home energy evaluations to help choose the improvements that will get the biggest possible return on their investment.

Not many companies will work to help you spend less money on their product, but VEC isn't like many

...we're in business to provide the best possible electric service at the lowest price possible.

other companies. As a not-for-profit cooperative, VEC is owned by our customers. We're not in business to make a profit, we're in business to provide the best possible electric service at the lowest price possible.

In an effort to help customers get the most out of their energy dollar, VEC and TVA are teaming up to offer an In-Home Energy Evaluation program. A trained energy-efficiency evaluator will come to your home and recommend steps you can take to save money on your energy bills. If you spend at least \$150 on recommended improvements, VEC and TVA will rebate up to 50% of the cost of qualifying improvements

up to a maximum of \$500. Some restrictions and limits may apply so call to get all the details.

Owners of manufactured or stick-built homes who have had permanent VEC electric service for at least one year and who have not participated in the *energy right*[®] heat pump program

at the same address for at least six months are eligible to participate. Homeowners must agree to a free in-home

energy evaluation by a VEC-approved evaluator, must read and sign an agreement to proceed, and TVA/VEC-approved contractors must complete the improvements.

Some improvements can be completed by the homeowner with pre-approval from VEC.

For more information or to request a free in-home energy evaluation, contact Kristy Kelly in VEC's Marketing and Economic Development Department at 423-334-7055. You can also call your local VEC Customer Service Center and, when prompted, enter extension 7055.



Volunteer Energy Cooperative's Jason Dye was among many VEC linemen working on a project to upgrade service in the Ten Mile area. Crews changed out equipment in preparation to double the distribution voltage in the area which will accommodate the increased demand for electricity in the area. The improvements will also result in more reliable service.



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 a cold snap doesn't require a degree in rocket science. 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 a new, energy-efficient heat pump - congratulations. 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*[®] program.

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 and Automatic Bank Draft** options. Levelized Billing means no big swings in your electric bill. It takes the guesswork out of your household budget. (See the *Levelized Billing article in this issue.*)

Lowering your thermostat by one or two degrees can mean savings on your heating bill.

For example, lowering your thermostat from 70 degrees to 68 degrees will save 6.2 percent on your heating bill. Lowering the thermostat just one degree will save you 3.1%.

However, let's say you like to keep your home warmer in the winter; raising the thermostat to 76 degrees will increase your heating bill by 18.6%.

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

Here are more 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 into the attic or through a cold basement or crawlspace, **be sure the ducts are well insulated**. If the insulation is missing or falling off, 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.

VEC Customers *Share*

Your Spare Change Makes a Difference

The VECustomers Share program funded \$31,500 in community service grants in October. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, more than \$3.1 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.

Organizations receiving grants in October include: Operation Reach, Kingston - \$2,500; McMinn United Futbol Club - \$1,500; Chattanooga Central High School Wrestling Booster Club - \$1,250; Cedar Valley Giants, Decatur - \$1,000; Meigs County Archery Club - \$1,000; Benton Lions Club - \$1,000; Cleveland Evening Lions Club - \$1,000; York Institute Dance Team, Jamestown - \$1,000; Glenn Martin Elementary School PTA, Crossville - \$1,000; Benton Christmas Fund Booster Club - \$1,000; Knights of Columbus Council 8152, Crossville - \$1,000; Calhoun Alumni Association - \$1,000; Creating Christmas Memories, Cleveland - \$1,000; Fentress County Public Library - \$1,000; Cumberland County 911 CARE Program - \$1,000; Fentress County Retired Teachers Association - \$1,000; Homestead Elementary School PTO, Crossville - \$1,000; Benton Elementary School PTO - \$845; Martin Elementary School Football Boosters, Crossville - \$800; Brown Middle School, Harrison - \$750; Friends of Aubrey Pack Memorial Library, Spring City - \$600; Toys for Children, Spring City - \$600; Pickett County Junior High School Boys Basketball Boosters - \$500; Monterey High School FCA - \$500; Set Apart Student Ministries, Monterey - \$500; Pickett County High School Beta Club - \$500; Midway High School Hall of Fame - \$500; Ms. Robins 3rd Grade Math/Science Explorers Club, Byrdstown - \$500; Hamilton County FOP - \$500; Eighth Grade Parent Group, Crawford - \$500; Meigs County-Decatur Chamber of Commerce - \$500; Kiwanis Club of Spring City - \$500; Brown Elementary School Cheerleader Boosters, Crossville - \$500; Pickett County High School Football Booster Club - \$500; Monterey Ministerial Association - \$500; Pickett County Titans Pee Wee Football - \$500; West Polk County Empty Stocking Volunteer Committee - \$455; Spring City 7th Grade Tremont Trip Booster Club - \$400; Spring City 8th Grade Washington, DC Trip Booster Club - \$300; United Way of Bradley County - \$200; Valley View StoreHouse, Cleveland - \$200; Tri-State Therapeutic Riding Center, Cleveland - \$200.



VECcustomers Share Board Member Gloria Schouggins, center, presents a check to members of the Meigs County Archery Club.



Levelized Billing Puts You in Control

in which the account is "settled" and either the customer owes the company or the company owes the customer. Unless you leave the VEC system, there is never a "true-up" month with the Levelized Billing program.

Will my amount due change each month?

Yes. The amount due varies slightly from month to month, depending on your average electric usage for the last 12 months. However, most bills vary less than 10% from month to month with Levelized Billing.

Can I pay more than the amount due shown on my bill?

The main convenience of Levelized Billing is the level amount that

...most bills vary less than 10% from month to month with Levelized Billing

customers are billed. The program works best when customers pay the exact amount due that is shown on their bills on time

It's a predictable cycle. Each year, electric customers experience "sticker shock" as temperatures dip in the winter and more electricity is used to heat their homes.

VEC's Levelized Billing program will keep electric bills more consistent from month to month. Levelized Billing, combined with our Automatic Bank Draft program, is the most convenient way to avoid sticker shock.

Levelized Billing calculates an average cost based on a 12-month

moving average of electric usage.

Unlike EMP, Levelized Billing customers do not have a yearly "true-up" - the average is re-calculated each

month. As the name implies, the goal of levelized billing is to make customer bills more LEVEL.

Levelized Billing is now available to VEC customers. Customers with previous usage and good pay history can sign up at any time during the year. Levelized Billing helps customers better manage their household expenses.

You can get more information about VEC's Levelized Billing option and even request to be enrolled in the program at the VEC website at www.vec.org.

Here are some frequently asked questions about Levelized Billing:

How do I qualify for the Levelized Billing program?

Residential customers who have previous usage history at the current address and who have a good payment history with VEC may participate in the program.

How is this different from other programs that allow me to pay an equal amount each month?

With most equal monthly payment programs, there is a "true-up" month

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 2010.

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 2010 high school graduates

whose parents or guardians are VEC electric customers. Applications will be judged by an independent panel based on 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 Cooperate Office in Decatur no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Time on March 1, 2010.

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Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

Residential Fuel Cost Adjustment Effective December 1, 2009

-\$0.00717

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