



Volunteer Energy Cooperative: Surge Guard Program

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Surge?

Also referred to as spikes, electrical surges are brief, sudden rises in voltage.

What Causes a Surge?

Lightning is one of the most obvious causes of power surges. Direct lightning strikes can transfer millions of volts of electricity which will overpower almost any surge protector. It is impossible to protect against direct lightning strikes.

Transient surges can be caused by indirect lightning strikes or faulty home wiring or grounding. They can also be transmitted through cable television and telephone lines.

There are also unavoidable problems that sometimes occur along the electric distribution system. VEC maintains 9,000 miles of line and occasionally weather, animals, motor vehicles, tree limbs, and other events interfere with the steady flow of electricity along those lines.

What is a Blink?

Although the two are often confused, a blink and a surge are not the same thing. A blink is a brief power loss that indicates one of VEC's system protection devices has momentarily interrupted power in order to protect an entire section of the system. These devices and these blinks protect your home, your appliances, and your electronic components as well. Blinks indicate that the VEC system is working properly.

Why is it Important that my Electric Service be Grounded and that Telephone and Cable Services be Bonded to this Ground?

Grounding at the electric service entrance is used as a path for electrical surges to find a safe place in the earth so that their damage is minimized. It is an important part of an overall surge protection program. Since surges can enter a home via electric, cable, and telephone services, bonding all of these services together at one ground is essential. When the VEC *Surge Guard* meter socket adapter is installed, our service personnel will perform a visual inspection, looking for proper grounding and bonding at the electric service. If proper grounding or bonding is not visible, you will be notified so that you can call an electrician who can correct the situation.

What is Surge Protection?

Surge protectors work by diverting excess voltage either back into the system or to the ground. VEC's *Surge Guard* program defends your home, your appliances, and your sensitive electronic equipment with two-levels of protection. For maximum protection, customers should have both.

Meter Socket Adapters (MSA) are installed at the meter by a VEC employee and protect the home's electrical system and larger appliances.

Plug-in Protectors shield individual devices from low-level internal fluctuations.

What is the Cost?

For \$5.95 per month and a one-time \$25 installation fee, VEC customers lease a Meter Socket Adapter (MSA) and a plug-in outlet.

Additional plug-in outlet devices may be purchased at www.spikestop.com (enter the code **vec1** to receive a 15% discount).

Who owns the Equipment?

Volunteer Energy Cooperative retains ownership and will replace defective or damaged *Surge Guard* equipment at no charge.

What if I want to Purchase Additional Plug-In Suppressors?

Additional plug-in suppressors purchased at www.spikestop.com will extend protection to other connected devices.

How Can I Tell if the MSA is Working?

The MSA and the outlet suppression devices have lights that indicate whether or not they are operating properly.

What Happens if There is a Surge?

The surge protection equipment will direct excess voltage back into the system or into the ground.

What does the Warranty Cover?

If damaged by a surge from VEC's electric distribution system while properly connected, with proper grounding/bonding:

White appliances such as refrigerators, washers, dryers, and cooking appliances that are protected by an MSA will be repaired or replaced up to \$500 per appliance or \$5,000 per event.

Electronic appliances protected by a MSA and the furnished multimedia power strip or plug-in protectors purchased at www.spikestop.com will be repaired or replaced up to \$500 per multi-outlet suppressor with an event total limit of \$5,000.

Call your local VEC Customer Service Center to file a claim.

Warranty and other program details are available at your local VEC Customer Service Center.



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