



Your Spring Safety and Maintenance Checklist

With nicer weather here and the hot days of summer just a few weeks away, now is a great time to take a look around the outside of your home to identify electrical safety hazards. Winter can be tough on your home's exterior. It's better to make repairs now before you and your family begin spending more time outside this summer. These simple tips can ensure that your family is safe when warm weather returns:

Inspect exterior outlets and switches

Look for visible damage to exterior receptacles and switches. Be on the lookout for discolored receptacles, which could be a sign of faulty wiring. Replace old outlets with GFCI outlets to reduce the risk of electrical shock, and be sure that any exterior outlets have covers to protect them from the elements. For receptacles near lakes, pools, or hot tubs, take extra care to be sure GFCI outlets are used and equipment is properly grounded. Call an expert if you have any questions.

Check exterior lighting fixtures

Did winter storms damage your exterior light fixtures? Look for visible damage, and replace any bulbs that are not working. Replacing light fixtures can be a DIY job, but it could also be dangerous if you don't know what you are doing. Consider hiring a professional if you're not sure.

Clear space around exterior equipment

Be sure plants and shrubs have not grown too close to heating and cooling equipment, which needs proper clearance for air to circulate properly. Also, be sure exterior fixtures like electric and gas meters and underground transformers can be easily accessed. Look for

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vegetation that has grown into overhead power lines. Never trim trees or shrubs near power lines. Contact your local VEC office for assistance.

Clean vents and filters

Check exterior HVAC equipment for dust and debris on coils and around vents. Follow the manufacturer's instructions to clean them, or hire a professional. Also be sure dryer vents are clear of lint or other debris.

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Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy
Cooperative

Show Your Support

Per Tennessee statute, the state's standard license plate is redesigned every eight years. The last plate was launched in 2006 with modifications in 2011, 2016, and 2017.

Last year, Tennessee governor Bill Lee announced that the state would redesign the standard license plate to celebrate our 225th year of statehood. Residents were invited to vote on their favorite design, and more than 300,000 votes were cast. The winning design, which received 42 percent of the vote, was announced in October.

While most motorists use the standard plates, it may surprise you to learn that there are more than 175 specialty plates also available in Tennessee. These plates allow you to show your pride in a school, sports team or career, to honor one's military service, or support a cause that matters to you. It costs a little more to get a specialty plate, but the state returns a portion of that extra money to the cause, school, or foundation responsible for the plate.

In 2019, Tennessee's electric cooperatives worked with state lawmakers to introduce a specialty license plate to honor the important work electric line workers do each day. These Powering Tennessee license plates have been available for just over two years, and 4,000 motorists have already opted for the plates. Unlike some specialty plates, a buyer does not have to be a line worker — or even work at a utility — to get a Powering Tennessee plate. Any Tennessee motorist can request one.

Funds raised through the sale of the Powering Tennessee specialty plates go to the Tennessee Lineworker Lifeline Fund, a nonprofit foundation established to support line workers and their families in the event of a serious injury or fatality while on the job. More than \$100,000 have already been raised to support this important effort.

Tennessee motorists have lots of options when it comes to license plates: the newly redesigned standard plate or one of the specialty plates. The next time you renew your plate, I encourage you to join me in supporting Tennessee's electric line workers with a Powering Tennessee license plate. You can learn more about the plate or learn how to order your own at poweringtennessee.org.





VEC Customers Shares is a grant program funded through the rounding up of members' bills to the nearest dollar. The most an individual member would pay within a year is \$11.88. Our members' yearly average is usually about \$5.50 each.

In return for the rounded up change from our members, we contribute to organizations across our 17 county service area. Each month, the VEC Customers Share Board meets and distributes the funds collected in the previous month. A board member represents each service area. In January, VEC Customers Share Grants totaled \$26,000.

Organizations receiving funds included Spring City Toys for Children (\$1,000). Spring City Toys for Children is a charity organization that provides items for less fortunate children. Kelly Lee, President of the organization says, "This grant reflects community support for the cause. We will be able to continue our mission this year. Thank you."

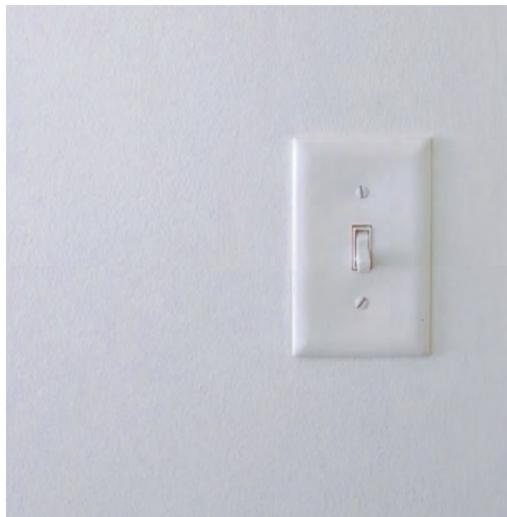
Since the inception of the program in October 2001, VECustomers Share members have awarded over \$7.4 million in grants. The deadline for grant applications is the last working day of each month. For additional information, contact the Office of Marketing and Economic Development at 423-334-7051. Applications are also available online at www.vec.org.



Rhea County VECustomers Share Board Member Eddie Galloway (right) presents a check to Kelly Lee, President of Spring City Toys for Children.

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Save Energy This Month



Spring is upon us. While you're waiting for warmer weather, challenge yourself and your family to spend this time saving energy.

Make March frugal by making a game out of saving energy. Challenge your children to compete to form energy-saving habits.

Create a checklist for the contest and a prize for the winner. Here are a few challenges:

- Turn off the light(s) each time you leave a room.
- Unplug appliances like the TV and computers at bedtime.
- Don't leave phone chargers plugged in when there's no phone attached.
- Switch off the bathroom fans once the steam has cleared after a shower.
- Wear sweaters and socks around the house so the family can set the thermostat a bit lower.
- Open exterior doors only to enter and exit the building; don't hold them open if you're not ready to walk through.

Games involving energy savings are a great way to teach children the value of energy and the senselessness of wasting it.

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Organizations receiving grants in January

Pickett County Food Bank	\$2,000	Table Graces	\$800
Spring City Friends of the Library	\$1,500	Monterey Jr. High School Cheerleaders	\$750
Clarkrange High School Art Club	\$1,500	Cumberland County High School Track Team	\$700
Partnership for Families, Children and Adults - Deaf Services	\$1,400	Stone Memorial High School Class of 2024	\$700
Monterey Lions Club Inc.	\$1,250	Fairfield Glade Fire Department	\$700
Midway Youth Cheerleading Organization	\$1,250	Junior Achievement of the Ocoee Region Inc	\$500
Midway Quarterback Club	\$1,250	Cumberland County High School Cheer Team	\$500
Clearwater Volunteer Fire Department	\$1,200	STARTS (Support The Arts)	\$500
New Hope Pregnancy Care Center	\$1,100	Meigs Crush 10U Baseball	\$500
CSTHEA Patriots Basketball	\$1,000	Meigs Fury 14U Softball	\$500
Hamilton County STARS	\$1,000	Meigs County Ministries	\$500
MARA Medical Ministry	\$900	Grithouse Wrestling Club (GHWC)	\$400
Polk County Ramp Festival	\$850	Cleveland Elite Baseball	\$400
Happy Hearts Seniors	\$850	Fentress County Bulldogs Football	\$250
		Fentress County Bulldog Cheerleaders	\$250

Tennessee Valley Authority

Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment Effective

February 1, 2022

2.088¢

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

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer.



Wash Your Washer

Staying home more often than usual means you're probably using your appliances nonstop, and that means you need to clean them more often.

Don't overlook the appliances that aren't in the kitchen.

It seems like your clothes washer would be a self-cleaning machine since it's used for cleaning, but the more it's used, the more it needs a good scrubbing to get rid of built-up detergent and ward off mold.

Here are a few pre-spring cleaning tips for the laundry room:

Top-loading washers – Built-up detergent and fabric softeners can clog the machine if they're not regularly removed. To do so, remove the dispensers for those liquids and scrub them with soap and water using a non-scratch sponge. Next, fill the washer with hot water and add a cup of bleach. Let it sit for an hour before running a full wash cycle—with an empty tub. Then, fill it with hot water again. This time, add a cup of white vinegar, and run a full wash cycle again. Finally, run a wash cycle with nothing but hot water.

For your first load of laundry after you clean the tub, wash whites only in case any residual bleach is still in the washer.

Front-loading washers – Get rid of mold and grime trapped in the door seal. Use a toothbrush and a solution of eight or nine cups of water and one cup of bleach to scrub the seal. Then, clean the tub the same way you would sanitize a top-loader, above.

Don't forget about your dishwasher, too. Many people do not realize that newer dishwashers have filters that should be cleaned manually. Be sure to remove and clean the filter monthly of food particles and grease buildup that cause bad smells in your dishwasher. Clean debris away from the filter, then twist filter to remove (or consult your manufacturer's guide). Scrub the filter with a soft brush or cloth under hot water until clean; then replace filter.

