



Give Your A/C a Break This Summer

Summertime seems to be getting hotter every year. This season, prepare your home in advance so relying more and more on your air conditioning won't show up as much on your electric bill.

Here are five ways to give your A/C a break this summer:

1. **Call an HVAC technician.** A professional can examine your system and let you know what needs repairing or replacing, which can prevent a mid-summer breakdown.
2. **Change or clean air filters.** When filters do their job properly, they trap dirt, pet hair, and anything else that's floating in the air from recirculating into your home when the air conditioner is blowing. But dirty filters can prevent air from flowing, too, which makes the A/C have to work extra hard to cool your house. The solution is to change or clean your air filters once a month during the summer.
3. **Run ceiling fans.** When the A/C is running at the same time as a ceiling fan, the room where the fan is located will feel cool enough that you can raise the thermostat by about 4 degrees. A fan doesn't cool the air, but it creates a breeze that makes anyone in the room feel cooler.
4. **Install a dehumidifier.** Another great partner for the A/C is an energy-efficient dehumidifier. Lowering the humidity in your home helps the air conditioner work more efficiently because it doesn't have to waste energy removing moisture from the air and can concentrate on simply cooling it.
5. **Don't create heat.** On days when it's warm enough to turn on the air conditioner, turn off your oven, clothes dryer, lamps, and other appliances that create heat. Wait until the day cools off a bit before running heat-producing machines.

It's Not Just a Good Idea – It's the LAW!

Most of us instinctively slow down when we spot the flashing lights of a law enforcement vehicle or an ambulance on the side of the roadway ahead. We need to keep in mind that as drivers in the state of Tennessee, we have a responsibility to move over into the next lane (after it's safe to do so, of course) if we encounter an emergency vehicle. In other words, it's the law. If it's not possible to safely move into the next lane, then we must reduce our speed accordingly.

The need to move over for a "first responder" seems pretty obvious, but there are other types of vehicles that need a wide berth: utility vehicles, highway maintenance vehicles, tow trucks, solid waste trucks, and other vehicles operated by those whose jobs require them to work alongside roadways.

It may seem like a matter of common sense, but failure to obey the "Move Over" Law is punishable by a \$500 fine; violators can also be subject to up to 30 days of jail time. This is more than a matter of courtesy to others; you or someone you love who happened to experience car trouble could also benefit from the law.

The consequences of ignoring the Move Over Law can involve much more than penalties for those who violate it. Just over a year ago, a supervisor with the Tennessee Department of Transportation was struck by a motorist while working along I-40 in Knoxville and had to be hospitalized.

To help prevent accidents like this, our workers always take care to wear high-visibility safety vests. They also place cones around their roadside workspaces, and if the situation calls for it, use "flaggers" to help route traffic around the area where they're working.

However, none of those precautions will make the slightest bit of difference if a driver fails to move over or slow down. The safety zone established by the Move Over law is designed to protect the lives of those whose truly essential work requires them to operate along our roadways. Don't we owe these folks the courtesy of not making their (often hazardous) job even more dangerous than it already is?

Put yourself in the position of having a loved one working within this "side of the road" space; we'd all be grateful to those who strictly obey the Move Over Law. Instead of finding motivation in your desire to avoid being ticketed, fined, or even jailed, we hope you'll decide to move over and slow down because it's the right thing to do.



Standing On the Cusp of a Bright Future

I would like to introduce – or perhaps reintroduce – myself. I was formerly Vice President for Marketing and Economic Development at Volunteer Energy Cooperative until my retirement in 2016. In March 2022, the VEC Board of Directors asked me to fill the role of Interim President/CEO at VEC until a permanent leader can be found. As of the time of this article, I have been Interim President/CEO at Volunteer Energy Cooperative for a little more than two months.

My view these days is different than before. I now have about 180 employees and more than 90,000 members who rely on me to make daily decisions that will impact their lives. The task is daunting, gratifying, humbling, and sometimes frustrating. But it is always challenging. I chose to accept this position because, frankly, I love this organization and the members we serve.

Having been retired for nearly 6 years, I see many new faces at VEC. I am impressed with the caliber of employees that we have hired in the last few years. I am encouraged that they and our more seasoned employees are excited about the future of VEC and our communities.

The management team here is second to none. They have been supportive and encouraging – and very patient – as I fill this role that is new to me. They all know their jobs inside and out and do not hesitate for a second to come together to accomplish whatever task they are given. They are passionate about the success of VEC.

I want to assure you that our cooperative is in good hands.

I expect that a permanent President/CEO will be hired within the next few months. He or she will be fortunate to have a strong organization in place and great people with which to work. I am blessed to play a small part in achieving a smooth transition to the next chapter in the story of Volunteer Energy Cooperative.

Stay tuned. The future is bright for Volunteer Energy Cooperative.



Patty Hurley
Interim President/CEO
Volunteer Energy
Cooperative

HAPPY
Fourth of July



VEC Customers Share Awards \$25,900 in Grants

VEC Customers Share is a grant program funded through the rounding up of member's 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.

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 every service area. In May, VEC Customers Share Grants totaled \$25,900.

Grant recipients included Salem Baptist Church's Vacation Bible School in Roane County. The grant money they received (\$2,000) will help them purchase gasoline and supplies for their bible school.

"Seeing youth accept Christ is always our goal at Salem Baptist," said Euphemia Clower, Salem Baptist Church Representative. "This grant will help make that possible. We are so grateful to VEC Customers Share for this grant."

Since the inception of the program in October 2001, VEC Customers 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 <https://vec.org/community-programs/vecustomers-share/>.



Roane County VEC Customers Share Board Member Rodney Fowler (right) presents a check to Euphemia Clower, Salem Baptist Church Representative.

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*Important Note . . .

Any member who has installed solar but didn't enroll in a TVA program and went behind the meter, notify your local service center so we can note your account. During a power outage, we will send someone out to check the voltage because it could possibly back feed onto the grid and electrocute our linemen. Thanks.



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Organizations receiving grants in April

Next Generation Sustainable Living Club	\$2,000	C5 Christian Counseling Center	
Meigs County FFA	\$2,000	of Cumberland County	\$700
Pickett County Family Engagement Committee	\$1,900	All-In FC (Futbol Club) TN 05/06 Boys Team	\$600
Homestead Community Food Pantry	\$1,250	STARTS (Support The ARTS)	\$500
Tri-County Center	\$1,024	Rhea County Community Center (Rc3)	\$500
Ocoee Middle School Football Booster Club	\$1,000	Unity Center	\$500
Benevolent & Protective Order of Elk's 1944	\$1,000	Standing Stone Historical Society	\$500
Midway High Softball Booster Club	\$1,000	Stone Memorial High School FCCLA	\$500
Fentress County Food Bank	\$1,000	Luminary United Methodist Church	\$500
Chilhowee Middle School Boys Basketball	\$850	Bon Air Mountain Historical Society	\$500
Polk County High School Drama Club	\$850	Midway High School Boys Basketball	\$500
Polk County High School Alumni Association	\$800	Heritage Quilt Guild	\$500
We Care Community Services/ Safe Haven Light	\$750	Upper Cumberland Diversity Advocates Inc.	\$450
Fentress County Fire Department	\$750	E.K. Baker School - PTO	\$300
Monterey High School Golf Boosters	\$750	Midway Quarterback Club	\$250
York Institute Wrestling	\$750	Midway Youth Cheerleading Organization	\$250
Rhea County Health Council - Give a Kid a Chance	\$750	Toys for Children - Monterey	\$250
		Pickett County Soil Conservation Club	\$100
		Friends of the Art Circle Library (Children's Programs)	\$76

Tennessee Valley Authority

Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment Effective

June 1, 2022

2.942¢

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

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer.



Pack a Bag - Before the Lights Go Out

We pack a suitcase when we're headed out on vacation, of course. We pack a bag when we know ahead of time that we'll be hospitalized for a surgical procedure. Soon-to-be empty-nesters watch anxiously as their college-aged child packs all that's necessary to furnish a dorm room. And as that delivery date approaches, every expectant mother has a bag packed and ready for when Mother Nature says, "It's time."

But there's another kind of packed bag that can come in handy: The one you stock to be prepared in the event of a prolonged power outage.

"We hope our members never need to rely on those kinds of supplies," says VEC Safety Superintendent Ty Ratcliff, "but we'd sure prefer that they have it and not need it instead of the other way around."

Depending on the time of year and your family's needs, here's a list of some common items that will prove very useful if electricity is unavailable for an extended period of time:

- Flashlights/batteries
- Long-burning candles and lighter or matches
- Water (one gallon per person per day)
- Nonperishable food/pantry items and a manual can opener
- First-aid kit
- Wet wipes/hand sanitizer
- Weather radio
- Portable phone charger
- Headlamps, deck of cards, portable battery-operated fan

Ratcliff stresses the need to check your power outage bag periodically, even if the need to use it hasn't arisen: "You'll want to be sure that expiration dates haven't passed and that batteries are still good. And there's one last critical piece of advice I can't stress enough: Make sure everyone in your family knows the location of this bag, box, or tote. It can't help you if you've forgotten where you've put it!"

