



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO BRYAN STORY

May Your Holidays Be Merry and Bright

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE the holiday season is already here, and we'll soon be gathering with family and friends to celebrate. This festive time of year brings joy and warmth, but as the weather gets cooler and we spend more time indoors, the holidays can also bring increased energy use and a higher risk of electrical and fire hazards.

Your team at Lamar Electric Cooperative cares about your well-being, so this month I'd like to share a few practical tips to help you stay safe and efficient during the holiday season.

Safety First

My family really enjoys decorating our home for the holidays. But before we deck the halls, I always check electrical cords and light strands to make sure they aren't frayed or damaged. This gives us peace of

Testing smoke alarms only takes a few seconds and could save lives, so make it a habit.

Season for Savings

Spending more time indoors with more guests in the home can really impact energy use. By taking a few small steps to save energy during the holiday season, you can minimize the effect on your power bill.

I like to remind my family members to mind the thermostat. Since heating and cooling makes up the majority of home energy consumption, the thermostat is one of the best places for savings.

On those chilly days, lower it a few degrees, especially when you have family or friends stopping by. Good company brings additional warmth to your home—and so do the oven and stove.

There's no denying one of the best parts of the holiday season is the food—not just the meals but the time we spend together in the kitchen. There are many ways to save in the heart of your home, but one of the best approaches is to cook with smaller countertop appliances, such as air fryers, slow cookers and toaster ovens.

These handy appliances consume a fraction of the energy used to heat the oven, creating the perfect recipe for mealtime and energy savings. If you do use the oven, plan to cook several dishes at the same time.

Your family can also save energy by decorating with LED holiday lights. LEDs are the most energy-efficient lighting option available, and they last much longer than traditional bulbs.

I hope you'll implement some of these energy-saving and safety

tips into your holiday plans. For additional advice, visit our website, lamarelectric.coop. We're here to help you with safety and savings year-round.

Your friends at Lamar Electric hope your holiday season is merry and bright. ■



STEFANKOLIC | ISTOCK.COM

mind, knowing our holiday lights are ready to safely brighten our home. I also check the lights we use outside to make sure they're rated for outdoor use.

Like many households, we also enjoy holiday-scented candles. While festive, candles can be fire hazards and should never be left unattended.

One of the best and easiest ways to safeguard your home is to test smoke alarms often. I test mine on the first of each month, so it's easy to remember.



ALEXANDR POTASHEV / ISTOCK.COM

Use Portable Home Generators Safely

IF YOU'VE LOST POWER, a portable generator can provide electricity to keep your home warm and power appliances. However, if used improperly, a generator may present serious hazards to you and the crews trying to get the electricity back on.

Before using a generator, read the specifications and instructions and follow them closely. The generator should have more capacity than the combined wattage of the electronics you will plug into it.

Never connect a portable generator directly to home wiring, which can result in potentially deadly backfeeding. When electricity gets fed back through the electrical system and meter into power lines, it can create a deadly hazard for lineworkers.

Never use a portable generator indoors because it produces carbon monoxide. Opening a window or door or turning on a fan will not produce enough fresh air to reduce the deadly gas. Operate the generator outside in an open but protected space from which fumes can dissipate harmlessly.

Before using a generator, install at least one CO detector in your home and be on the lookout for the signs of carbon monoxide poisoning. Symptoms include dizziness, nausea, headaches and lethargy. If you or someone else is showing these symptoms, move into fresh air and seek medical attention right away.

Make sure nothing is plugged into the generator when turning it on.

To avoid electrocution, keep the generator dry and do not use it in rainy or wet conditions. Operate it on a dry surface under an open, canopy-like structure. Do not touch the generator with wet hands.

Be sure to turn the generator off and let it cool down before refueling.

Remember, even a properly connected portable generator can become overloaded, resulting in overheating or generator failure. If necessary, stagger the operating times for various equipment to prevent overloads.

Run your generator for 10 minutes once a month to ensure that it works properly. ■



5225 US Hwy. 82 E, Blossom, TX 75416
P.O. Box 68, Blossom, TX 75416
Phone (903) 784-4303
Web lamarelectric.coop

General Manager and CEO
Bryan Story

Board of Directors
George M. Wood, President, Blossom
Lyle Yoder, Vice President, Pattonville
Mike Williams, Secretary-Treasurer,
Detroit
Matthew Albus, Roxton
James D. Floyd, Annona
Barbara Golden, Detroit
Jeremy D. Hamil, Sumner
Josh Hostetler, Sumner
Ron E. Tippit, Clarksville

Contact Us

For information and to report outages, please call us.
(903) 784-4303

MEMBER BENEFITS

- Level billing
- Automated meter reading
- Free bank draft service
- E-Bill
- Visa and Mastercard accepted
- Prepaid metering

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

Lamar Electric provides *Texas Co-op Power* and *TexasCoopPower.com* to give you information about events, safety, special programs and other activities of your cooperative. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the co-op office.

VISIT US ONLINE

lamarelectric.coop



Check us out at
[TexasCoopPower.com/lamar](https://www.lamarelectric.coop/lamar)

IT'S OUR WAY OF LIFE

Being there, every minute of every day. As your hometown electric cooperative, it's not just our way of doing business, it's our way of life. It's value that goes far beyond the energy we provide – value you can't put a price on.

Visit lamarelectric.coop to discover the power of your co-op.



Should You Use Space Heaters at Home?

The answer is usually no

SMALL SPACE HEATERS are meant to do exactly as their name says: heat a small space. But unfortunately, many people use portable space heaters to heat an entire home, which can take a serious toll on energy bills.

The truth is, whether you should use space heaters really depends on your home's efficiency and energy needs.

If you're using a space heater to compensate for problems in your home, like inadequate insulation, drafty windows and exterior doors, or an inefficient heating system, space heaters are not a practical solution. Your best bet is to improve the overall efficiency of your home.

If you're on a tight budget, caulking and weatherstripping around windows and exterior doors is a low-cost, easy way to save energy.

Depending on the size of your home, adding insulation can be a great next step. Loose fill insulation typically costs \$1-\$1.50 per square foot. Taking these proactive energy-saving measures rather than relying on space heaters for supplemental warmth can reduce your heating and cooling costs for years to come.

Perhaps your home is already energy-efficient but you run cold and want a specific room to be cozier than the rest. In this case, a space heater may work for your needs. A good comparison is ceiling fans; we use ceiling fans in the summer to cool

people, not rooms. A space heater can be used in a similar way during winter months.

Only use a space heater in small spaces that you're occupying and, if possible, try to shut off other rooms to contain the warmth provided by the portable heater. If you decide to use a space heater to heat a small area in your home, make sure it's properly sized for the space. Most heaters include a general sizing table.

A word about safety: more than 1,700 residential fires are associated with the use of space heaters every year, resulting in more than 80 deaths. If you must use one, purchase a newer model that includes the most current safety features and make sure it carries the UL Solutions label or that of another reputable certification lab.

Choose a heater controlled via thermostat to avoid energy waste and overheating, and place the heater on a level surface away from foot traffic when in use. Always keep children, pets and anything flammable well away from space heaters.

Consider alternative ways to stay warm, like extra layers of clothing or UL-approved electric blankets. If you have hardwood or tile floors, lay down area rugs to provide additional insulation and maintain warmth. ■





DENISTANGNEVIR | ISTOCK.COM

How Winter Weather Impacts Reliability

WHEN OUTDOOR TEMPERATURES DROP, our electricity use increases. That's because we're doing more activities inside, and our heating systems are running longer and more often to keep us warm. Factor in that we all tend to use electricity at the same times—in the morning and early evenings—and that equals a lot of strain on our electric grid.

At Lamar Electric Cooperative, we work closely with our local gIn winter months, when even more electricity is being used simultaneously across the country, it's possible for electricity demand to exceed supply, especially if an unexpected event like an ice storm or equipment malfunction occurs. If this happens, though it's rare, the grid operator for our region may call for rolling power outages to relieve pressure on the grid, and Lamar Electric will inform you about the situation.

Lamar Electric Cooperative takes proactive steps to keep our portion of the grid as resilient as possible to ensure electric reliability during extreme weather, regular system maintenance, grid modernization efforts and disaster response planning—but it takes everyone to keep the grid reliable.

To help us keep the heat on for you, your family and neighbors, here are a few things you can do (and save some money along the way):

Select the lowest comfortable thermostat setting, and turn it still lower whenever possible—such as at night or when you're away from home.

Seal air leaks around windows and exterior doors with caulk and weatherstripping. Air leaks and drafts force your heating system to work harder.

Stagger your use of major appliances such as dishwashers, ovens and dryers. Nighttime is the best time.

Use smaller countertop appliances, like slow cookers and air fryers, to save energy.

Ensure that your heating system is optimized for efficiency with regular maintenance and proper insulation.

Make sure your furnace filter isn't clogged and dirty. Replace it regularly.

When possible, use cold water instead of hot for washing clothes. Your laundry won't mind.

Setting your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees can help you save energy and reduce mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes.

Unplug devices when not in use to eliminate unnecessary energy use. Even when turned off, electronics in standby mode consume energy.

Plug devices into a power strip so you can turn them off all at once.

Understanding winter weather's impact on energy demand is crucial for maintaining a reliable power supply. By adopting energy conservation practices during periods of extreme cold, you can not only save money on your electric bills, you can also contribute to the resilience of the grid.

That helps keep our community warm and connected. ■



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

from Lamar Electric Cooperative

May you have the gift of faith, the blessing of hope and the peace of His love at Christmas and always.

Our office will be closed Tuesday–Wednesday, December 24–25, and Wednesday, January 1, in observance of the holidays.



MANAEMEDIA | ISTOCK.COM

Keep Holidays Happy and Safe

THE WINTER HOLIDAYS can be the best time of the year—as long as you and your family stay safe.

Be extra vigilant about fire safety as you celebrate the holidays. Amid the guests, the cooking, the decorations and the business of the season, a third of all residential fires occur during the winter, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

Protect your family and your home by following these electrical safety tips:

- ▶ Don't overload outlets or electrical cords. Instead of plugging the extra lights, appliances and decorations into a multisided plug, invest in a power strip.
- ▶ Never run extension or other cords under rugs or in high-traffic areas. People can trip over them, and the rug can cause wear on a cord, making it vulnerable to overheating and starting a fire.
- ▶ If you find a cracked or frayed wire on any cord, throw it (and whatever device it's permanently attached to) away.
- ▶ After the holidays are over, pack up your extension cords and store them with your decorations. Extension cords are not designed for permanent use.
- ▶ Test smoke detectors regularly and replace batteries at least annually. ■



BG WALKER | ISTOCK.COM