

June 2020

Newsletter

Tips for Managing Energy Use during COVID-19

As many families and businesses transition to remote-work, they may see a surge in home energy use – and in upcoming electric bills. Simple money-saving steps can help lower monthly electric bills without jeopardizing safety or comfort.

Recommended energy-saving tips include:

- Program your thermostat to maximize energy savings. Setting your thermostat one degree lower when heating or one degree higher when cooling can reduce energy use by up to 5 percent.
- Do full loads of laundry and wash with cold water. Using warm water instead of hot can cut a load's energy use in half, and using cold water will save even more.
- Air dry dishes. This step can cut your dishwasher's energy use by up to 50 percent.
- Substitute LEDs for conventional light bulbs. Lighting can amount to up to 12% of monthly energy use. LED bulbs can cut lighting costs by 75%.
- Unplug appliances and electronics when not in use. Small appliances and electronics use energy even when not in use. When powered on, game consoles, televisions and similar electronics are responsible for up to 12 percent of energy use.

Because we understand that many of our members will be facing potential financial hardship due to closed businesses and self-quarantine measures, we are temporarily waiving delinquent fees and pausing all disconnects for non-payment. Your usage and balance owing will continue to accrue so we do encourage members to pay what you can to avoid a large bill in the future. It's important for everyone to be mindful of their energy use and consider adjusting certain habits to avoid higher costs later on.

If you have questions regarding your electric bill email info@ocec.coop or call (509) 996-2228.



Hours:

Monday - Thursday
7:00 am - 5:30 PM

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Fire Preparedness

If you are a homeowner in Okanogan County, now is the time to prepare for fire season. Wildland fire is a fact of life here. There is no way to "fire-proof" a forest or house, but there are many things you can do to make your home more resistant and resilient. Below is a checklist of actions that can reduce your wildfire risk.

- ☐ Clear leaves and other debris from gutters, eaves, porches and decks.
- ☐ Remove dead vegetation from under your deck and within 10 feet of the house.
- ☐ Remove anything stored underneath decks or porches.
- ☐ Screen or box-in areas below patios and decks with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating.
- ☐ Remove flammable materials (firewood stacks, dry vegetation) within 30 feet of your home's foundation and outbuildings, including garages and sheds. If it can catch fire, don't let it touch your house, deck or porch.
- ☐ Remove vegetation from around propane tanks, power poles and electric "green boxes". If you have any questions about what to remove, please call the electric Co-op.
- ☐ Wildfire can spread to tree tops. If you have trees on your property, prune so the lowest branches are 6 to 10 feet from the ground.
- ☐ Keep your lawn hydrated and maintained. If it is brown, cut it down to reduce fire intensity. Dry grass and shrubs are fuel for wildfire.
- ☐ Don't let debris and lawn cuttings linger. Dispose of these items quickly to reduce fuel for fire.
- ☐ Inspect shingles or roof tiles. Replace or repair those that are loose or missing to prevent ember penetration.
- ☐ Cover exterior attic vents with metal wire mesh no larger than 1/8 inch to prevent sparks from entering the home.
- ☐ Enclose under-eave and soffit vents or screen with metal mesh to prevent ember entry.

OCEC & OCEI Welcome New Employees

OCEC is pleased to welcome Jesse Davis to the Engineering Team as our new Staking Technician. Jesse lives in the Methow Valley with his wife Carmen.



OCEI is excited to have Travis Manthey join our propane team. Travis brings 5 years of prior propane service experience to our team.



5 STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING

Working on an outdoor project? Always call 8-1-1 first, because you never know what's below. Here are five easy steps for safe digging:

Source: call811.com

1. NOTIFY

Call 8-1-1 or make a request online two to three days before you start.



2. WAIT

Wait two to three days for a response to your request. Affected utilities will send a locator to mark any underground utility lines.



3. CONFIRM

Confirm that all affected utilities have responded by comparing the markers to the list of utilities the 8-1-1 call center notified.



4. RESPECT

Respect the markers provided by the affected utilities. They are your guide for the duration of your project.



5. DIG CAREFULLY

If you can't avoid digging near the markers (within 18-24 inches on all sides, depending on state laws), consider moving your project.

