

July 2021 Newsletter



OCEC to resume Delinquent Penalties and Disconnects



The Washington state Governor's Disconnection Moratorium (Proclamation 20-23) will expire on July 31, 2021.

OCEC will resume assessing late fees and penalties on electric bills beginning with the August 1, 2021 billing. OCEC has not charged any delinquent penalties or disconnected services since March 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic was unprecedented. We know some of our members may be facing financial challenges and we understand you may continue to have trouble paying your electric bill during this time. If you missed payments and have a past-due balance, we can help. If you are unable to pay your bill, please contact our office as soon as possible to discuss a payment arrangement. We are available Monday-Thursday 7:00am-5:30pm at (509) 996-2228.

Additional customer assistance programs are available through our community partners; The Cove, Room One and Okanogan County Community Action Council. We can provide you with additional information to contact these organizations.

Hours:

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

Office Info:

**93 W Chewuch Rd
Winthrop, WA 98862**
Toll Free: (888) 710-2228
Local: (509) 996-2228

Online:

Web:
www.ocec.coop
Email:
info@ocec.coop
Twitter:
[@ocec_info](https://twitter.com/ocec_info)

OCEC Board:

Sara Carlberg
scarlberg@ocec.coop
Cara Godwin
cgodwin@ocec.coop
John Kirner
jkirner@ocec.coop
Michael Murray
mmurray@ocec.coop
Dale Sekijima
dsekijima@ocec.coop
Travis Thornton
tthornton@ocec.coop
Alan Watson
awatson@ocec.coop

Do we have your contact information?



- Is your old landline phone your main contact on your account?
- Do we have your correct email address? We have E-Bills available if you're tired of paper!
- Are you receiving outage text alerts? Should another person in your house get them too?

We want to be sure we can contact you when the need arises!

Call the office at (509) 996-2228 or email info@ocec.coop to check on your account information today.

OCEC Fire Mitigation Plan *Part 2*

OCEC to Include Fire Safety Shutoffs in its Fire Mitigation Plan (Part 2)

(This is the second of a two-part series on OCEC's Fire Mitigation Plan. The plan and both articles are on the OCEC website.)

Across the west and here in the Methow Valley, longer, drier, more dangerous fire seasons have become the new normal. In response to this, OCEC has developed a Fire Mitigation Program. This program works towards lowering risks of trees outside the easements and the required clear zones around the wires from getting into the overhead lines and creating an ignition source. These actions are based on similar programs California utilities developed in response to recent fires in their areas. Recently, the 2020 fires in Oregon have prompted OCEC to add the potential for Fire Safety Shutoffs (FSS) to its fire mitigation plans.

After a Fire Safety Shutoff Event

During an FSS event, conditions are continuously monitored. When conditions indicate that an FSS is no longer needed, lines are patrolled during daylight. Lines need to be patrolled in daylight so the patroller can visually see that the lines are clear to be re-energized. The length of these outages depends on several factors and cannot be determined before a specific FSS event occurs.

Membership Help During FSS Events

As part of our plan to support customers during Fire Safety Shutoffs, OCEC may establish a general community resource center at the Barn in Winthrop.

This resource center will provide members affected by power shutoffs a place to go for information. Members will have access to water, snacks, ice, and cell phone charging.

These resource centers may not be immediately available if the FSS is an emergency and there is no lead time to set it up. If an emergency FSS outage looks prolonged, OCEC will then establish the resource center. If an FSS is predicted, OCEC will open the resource center and have it ready in case an FSS occurs. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, the resource center at the Barn will not be implemented until 2022.

What Members Can Do to Prepare

Members will need to self-supply energy needs if desired during an FSS. Generators are an excellent way to self-generate power during electrical outages. Please contact an electrician or OCEC for more information. Among other things, a member can do the following to prepare:

- Have a back-up source of power. Loss of power to critical equipment such well pumps, medical equipment, and irrigation cannot be avoided without self-generation or battery back-up.
- Have a plan for household items/medications that need refrigeration or freezing.
- Sign up for OCEC text messages.
- Sign up for the Okanogan County Emergency Management System.

Taking these pro-active fire safety steps during red flag conditions may cause more frequent and longer outages but we hope that our members will understand the benefits of reduced risk outweigh the increase in possible outages.

Review our full two-part series on OCEC's Fire Mitigation Plan on the OCEC website.