



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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541-536-2126 • 800-722-7219

Departments

Member Service Option 3
Engineering Option 4
Energy Efficiency Option 5
Operations Option 6

After-Hours Outages and Emergencies:
541-536-2165 or 800-752-5935

OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Thursday
7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Closed Fridays and holidays

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Vice President

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The board meets the fourth Monday
of each month at the co-op office.

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Assistant General Manager

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OR-23

Electrical Safety Around Power Lines: Awareness and Calling 811 Saves Lives

Electricity powers our daily lives but can be extremely dangerous if safety precautions are ignored. Power lines—both overhead and underground—pose serious risks to homeowners, construction workers, farmers and utility personnel. Whether you're doing yard work, operating heavy machinery or planning an excavation, staying aware of power lines and following safety protocols is essential. Here's what you need to know:

Overhead Power Line Hazards

Overhead power lines, often mistaken for harmless cables, carry thousands of volts of electricity. Contact with these lines—or even getting too close to them—can result in severe burns, electrocution or even death. Electricity can arc through the air and jump several feet to strike a person or object. This danger looms during seemingly routine activities such as moving ladders, trimming trees or operating heavy construction equipment.

Accidents often occur with contact to power lines from tools or equipment, such as cranes and dump trucks lifting materials, or farm machinery, such as grain augers and irrigation systems, operating near high-voltage lines. Tree branches or fallen limbs touching wires can also become energized and hazardous. The best way to prevent this is to always look up and stay aware of your surroundings.

Maintain a distance of at least 10 feet from power lines, and keep even farther away from high-voltage transmission lines. Never touch or try to move a downed line—always assume it's live. If a power line falls on your vehicle, remain inside and call 911, only exiting if there's an immediate threat, such as a fire.

Underground Power Line Hazards

Underground power lines present a different but equally serious hazard. Because they are hidden from view, many people overlook the dangers. Accidentally striking a buried electrical line can cause power outages, electrocutions, severe injuries, explosions or even fatalities. This is why it is crucial to call 811 before starting any digging project.

Whether you plan to install a fence, plant a tree or excavate for a construction project, dialing 811 connects you to a local utility locating service that marks underground lines for free. Failure to follow this step can have serious consequences:

- Damaging power lines, causing service outages for an entire neighborhood.
- Hitting a gas line, potentially causing explosions or fires.
- Coming into contact with buried electrical cables, resulting in injuries or fatalities.

Always call at least two to three business days before starting any excavation work to ensure a safe digging environment. Taking these precautions can save lives. Staying aware and respecting the power of electricity is everyone's responsibility.

CEO/General Manager Jim Anderson

"Stay aware, stay alive, look up, call 811, and respect the power of electricity."

