

# COOPERATIVE

## REVIEW

For members of Union Power Cooperative



## Stay Safe While Using Electricity

**S**afety is the highest priority for Union Power, and as your local energy provider, we encourage our members to make safety a priority, too.

May is National Electrical Safety Month, but it's important to take safety precautions year-round.

Here are some simple tips:

### DO:

- **Unplug it.** Appliances, tools, and other devices are still connected to electricity when they are plugged in, even if they are turned off. Turn off AND unplug all electric devices when you're done using them.
- **Inspect it.** Examine electrical cords often for broken connectors or fraying, and throw away any worn cords. Only buy cords that have been approved by an independent testing laboratory. Also, watch your wattage/lumens and only use light bulbs that don't exceed the maximum wattage/lumens listed on your lamp or fixture.
- **Check it.** Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) outlets—those that protect against electrocution—should be used in any area where water and electricity could mix, including kitchens, bathrooms, garages and

outdoors, and should be tested monthly. You should also check your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors once a month to ensure they are working properly.

### DON'T:

- **Overload it.** Overloaded electrical circuits can cause residential fires. Never use extension cords or multi-outlet converters for appliances. All major appliances should be plugged directly into a wall outlet, and you should only plug one heat-producing appliance into an outlet at a time.
- **Extend it.** Extension cords are not a permanent solution. If you're using extension cords regularly, you may need extra outlets and should contact a licensed electrician.
- **Touch it.** Never go near or drive over a power line. If you encounter a downed line, leave the area immediately and notify us at 704-289-3145. Never place ladders, poles, or other items near power lines, and don't fly kites or drones near lines or substations. Teach children not to put their fingers in electrical outlets, use child-proof outlet covers, and keep appliances and cords away from children. Also, never touch electrical appliances with wet hands or use them near sinks, tubs, toilets, or showers.

For more safety tips and information, visit [union-power.com](http://union-power.com), or follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.



# Shopping for the Right Lightbulb

Today, there are several lightbulb options available in stores that are much more energy efficient than standard incandescent lightbulbs. And since prices on energy-saving bulbs are a lot more affordable, it's become much easier to be energy efficient and save on lighting costs.

When shopping for lightbulbs, here's what you should keep in mind:

## Look for ENERGY STAR-qualified bulbs

ENERGY STAR-qualified LED lightbulbs use only 20%–25% of the energy and last 15 to 25 times longer than the standard incandescent bulbs they replace.

## Read the Product Label

An easy-to-read product label is printed on the packaging of most lightbulbs. It indicates the bulb's brightness, light color/appearance, energy use, estimated energy costs, and lifespan.

## Brightness is measured in lumens

In the past, the brightness of a lightbulb was measured in watts, but since the introduction of energy-saving bulbs, this is a less useful measure of brightness. You can choose bulbs

for the brightness you want by comparing lumens instead of watts. The higher the number of lumens, the brighter the lightbulb.

## Energy-efficient bulbs are available in many styles, sizes, and colors

LED bulbs are available in a variety of shapes and sizes for any application, including recessed cans, track lighting, table lamps, and more. You can even find LED bulbs that are dimmable. They range in colors from warm yellow to cool blue.

Choosing the right kind of lightbulbs for your home can have a significant impact on your energy consumption. With energy-saving lightbulbs, you can light your home using the same amount of light, while using a lot less energy.

To learn more about lighting options, visit [union-power.com/lighting](https://union-power.com/lighting).



## Calculate Savings for Energy-Efficient Lighting

You might be wondering—is switching to energy-efficient lighting worth the investment? Our Lighting Savings Calculator can help you make smart decisions when it comes to choosing lighting for your home by comparing the savings potential of using energy-efficient bulbs versus standard incandescent bulbs. Access the Lighting Calculator by visiting [union-power.com/energysavingcalculators](https://union-power.com/energysavingcalculators) and select the green "Lighting Calculator" icon to discover your home's energy and cost savings potential today!



## Helping Members in Need

The impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is being felt all over the world, including here in our own communities. Our members are a part of the Union Power family, and together we will get through this situation. Many members have reached out asking how they can help during this difficult and uncertain time. Those who are interested in helping members who are experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19 can assist by donating a Power Bucks gift certificate for your family member, friend, or neighbor who is a Union Power member.

Power Bucks allow you to purchase kilowatt-hours of electricity for any Union Power member in need. Call 704-289-3145 to speak with a customer service representative (CSR) who will apply the Power Bucks credit to the member's account of your choice. The member's next bill will show a credit for the amount of Power Bucks purchased.

We believe we are better when we work together. Thank you all for being a huge part of who we are and helping to brighten someone's day by giving them the gift of power!



## Keep Utility Poles Free of Signs and Flyers

From lawn care, real estate, yard sales, to lost pets—you name it, and we've seen a flyer for it on a utility pole. Although utility poles offer a convenient place to post a sign or flyer and may seem harmless, doing so creates safety hazards for lineworkers.

Lineworkers risk increased injury to themselves and damage to their equipment, rubber gloves, boots, and protective clothing when items are posted on poles. Nails and tacks can also get in the way of the climbing hooks lineworkers wear on their boots when climbing a pole.

An additional issue involves damage to the pole itself. Over time, water seeps into holes surrounding nails, staples, and tacks. Eventually, the pole will deteriorate and need to be replaced, creating another expense for the cooperative and its members.

Companies and individuals posting signs on poles could face legal action or be fined for the cost of sign removal and disposal. We ask that everyone refrain from posting items on poles for the safety of all concerned. Together, we can keep our dedicated lineworkers safe and working efficiently.





## Protecting Yourself from Phone Scams

Picture this – you get a phone call saying, “Your electricity will be immediately shut off unless you pay your past-due bill.” You may not think you owe a balance, but the caller sounds convincing and is insisting that you hurry and make a payment. What should you do in this situation?

### If you get a call like this, here are some things you can do:

- Contact Union Power directly at 704-289-3145 for questions or concerns regarding your payment or billing information. Don’t call any number the caller gave you. Also, know your utility bill payment options—online, by phone, mobile app, automatic bank drafts, mail, or in-person.
- Never provide or confirm personal information (Social Security number, date of birth) or financial information (banking account information, debit or credit card information) to anyone initiating contact with you claiming to be someone from Union Power.
- Take your time. If someone calls saying you have to pay your bill immediately to avoid disconnection, tell them you would like to verify that they are a legitimate Union Power representative by calling a verified number for the co-op. Beware of a caller exhibiting impatience, annoyance, or anger when you question their authority. Notice if their emotion intensifies when you ask to speak with their manager, request their phone number, or offer to call back later.

- Always ask questions. Ask the person calling you to provide you with your account number, your last payment amount, date of payment, and his/her employee identification number. If he/she is a legitimate Union Power representative, this information will be readily accessible. If not, hang up and call a Union Power customer service representative.
- Report the scam. Write down details of the scammer’s request, including the name they provided you, the date and time you spoke with them, their caller ID number, the method and amount of payment they requested, any phone number they requested you call to pay your bill, and any other details that might aid in a possible criminal investigation. If you already paid, you should also tell the payment provider—such as the wire transfer or credit card company. You may not get your money back, but it’s important to tell them about the scam.

Scammers are constantly updating their tactics, and you can never be too careful when it comes to your personal and financial safety. We ask that you protect yourself and pass on information about impostor utility scams to people you know. If you have questions about a call you received from someone claiming to be a Union Power representative, call our office at 704-289-3145, to verify who you’re talking to.



# Interested in Reducing your Farm Energy Costs?

## *Sign up for the Farm Energy Audit Program*

The North Carolina Energy Audit Program provides discounted energy audits to help your farm prioritize energy efficiency projects and access funding for equipment upgrades.

The program provides an unbiased third-party evaluation of energy efficiency and demand reduction opportunities on your farm and ranks each project by a simple payback period. Each energy audit also includes a detailed inventory of your current equipment and an analysis of your energy usage by farm activity.

This program will cover 75% of the cost of your energy audit. Your energy audit can be used to access funding through USDA programs such as the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), which provides grants up to 25% of your project cost and loan guarantees up to 75% of your project cost. There is no obligation to move forward with projects once you receive your audit report.

This program is funded by USDA Rural Development and operated by the North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation and EnSave, Inc. The program is offered on a first-come, first-served basis and funding is limited. Call 1-800-672-8212 today to learn more!



Get a **FREE**  
Estimate!

Offer Ends  
**MAY 15!**

## Getting Prepared for Summer Is a Breeze!

Call **Union Services** and get a jump-start on your home's comfort with up to **\$500 in instant rebates** on a new qualifying Trane system today!



**704-283-9047**  
**savewithunion.com**

Contact Union Services or visit [Trane.com](http://Trane.com) for complete program eligibility, dates, details, and restrictions. Available through participating independent Trane dealers. Special rebates from \$75 up to \$500. All sales must be to homeowners in the United States. Void where prohibited. Valid on qualifying equipment only. Offer expires 5/15/2020.



# 4 COMMON CULPRITS OF ELECTRICAL FIRES

Outdated wiring and overloaded circuits are the most common causes of electrical fires.

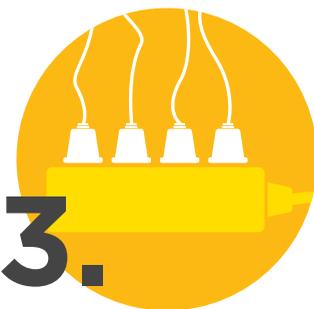
Check the following areas of your home to ensure your home's electrical safety is up to par.



**Electrical outlets:** Faulty electrical outlets are a leading cause of home fires. As outlets age, so do the wires behind them that you can't see. Any loose, damaged or warm-to-the-touch outlets should be repaired or replaced.



**Electrical wiring:** Outdated wiring is another common cause of electrical fires. Frequently tripped breakers, flickering lights and burning smells are clear warning signs. If your home is more than 20 years old, it may not be able to handle today's increased power load. If you suspect your home's wiring is outdated, leave this one to the pros and contact a qualified electrician.



**Overloaded cords and outlets:** Extension cords are not permanent solutions. If your big-screen TV, home theater system and other electronics are plugged into one extension cord, it's time to call an electrician and install additional outlets.



**Old appliances:** Older appliances are more likely to have loose or damaged wiring, which means they're more likely to catch fire. Check older appliances for damage and determine if it's time to upgrade or replace. Also check to ensure you're using appliance-grade outlets. A qualified electrician can help with installation.

# Right-of-Way Clearing

During the next month, you may see our tree-trimming crews in your neighborhood: Lewis Tree Service and Asplundh Tree Expert Company.

**Mecklenburg County:** Apple Mint Ct, Beaver Dam Ln, Beaver Stream Rd, Birchhill Rd, Brandonwood Ln, Clubhouse Ct, Foxcrest Dr, Golfview Ct, Idlewild Rd, Kale Ln, Lebanon Rd, Matthews Mint Hill Rd, Mayhew Forrest Ln, Quail Ridge Dr, Saddlewood Ln, Singletree Rd, Twilight Dr, Well Rd

**Rowan County:** Basinger Rd, Black Rd, Bringle Ferry Rd, Emerald Bay Dr, Flat Creek Church Rd, Pond School Rd, Ribelin Rd, Richfield Rd, Shaver Rd, Top Gear Ln

**Union County:** Allen Black Rd, Beacon Hills Rd, Bent Oak Dr, Brookgreen Terrace, Clearwater Dr, Crowell Dairy Rd, Cull Williams Ln, Duncan Rd, Edgefield Ct, Fairfield Dr, Faith Church Rd, Faith Ln, Farm Ct, Fieldstone Dr, Fox Hunt Rd, Garrett Rd, Green Ash Ln, Hembywood Dr, Hillcrest Dr, Lake Dr, Lawyers Rd, Lazy B Circle, Lighthouse Way, Lineview Dr, Marcus Ln, Mill Grove Rd, Millhouse Ln, Millwright Ln, Moser Circle, Mulberry Ct, Noah Helms Rd, Pin Oak Dr, Red Lantern Rd, Shadow Lake Ln, Stevens Mill Rd, Stoney Ridge Rd, Sutton Dr, Teakwood Dr, Tranquil Pl, Tuckaway Ct, W Duncan Rd, W Hwy 218, W Old Dutch Rd, Water Wheel Ct, Wild Rose Ct, Willowbrook Dr, Wright Rd



For more information about Union Power's vegetation management program or tree trimming practices, please call 704-289-3145 and speak with Wil Ortiz (ext. 3323), Carrie Lorenz-Efird (ext. 3291), or Ted Connell (ext. 3220). Visit [union-power.com](http://union-power.com) for monthly right-of-way clearing updates.



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month:

When the weather is nice, put your grill to use! During summer months, cooking outdoors is a great way to save energy and eliminate unwanted heat from cooking indoors.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

The Cooperative Review newsletter is published monthly for the members and friends of Union Power Cooperative.

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