

# Cooperative Review

MARCH 2022



## How Smart Power Strips Can Help Save Energy and Money

Did you know a smart power strip lets you plug in multiple devices and detects when they're no longer in use to turn them off/save you money? This is a great option for TV or computer set-ups because smart power strips protect your devices and help reduce your energy usage.

### Traditional Power Strips vs. Smart Power Strips

Both traditional and smart power strips supply power to multiple devices using only one electrical outlet. Traditional power strips are meant to protect your devices from power surges, but as long as your power strip is on, the devices plugged into it will continue to use energy—even if they are in standby mode.

On the other hand, a smart power strip is designed to protect both your devices and your wallet! Smart power strips can detect when a device is in standby mode so they can cut off power and save energy. Using a smart power strip can reduce your overall energy usage, which will decrease your utility bills.

If you have a lot of power strips to change over, then you should consider the cost of making the switch.

### Tips for Using Smart Power Strips

- There are several types of smart power strips, so it's important to learn which one is appropriate for your devices. The main difference between each type of smart power strip is the method used to detect whether or not a device is in standby mode. For example, some smart power strips use USB cables to measure a computer's power level and detect when it is in standby mode. However, some computers continue to power those USB ports, even if it's cut off energy to the device itself. As a result, this type of smart power strip will not be as effective.



- There are also motion detector smart power strips, which assume that a device is in standby mode when activity is no longer detected. These smart power strips are perfect for certain devices, such as lamps, however they are not ideal for computers. If you use a motion detector strip on a computer, it's possible that your computer could shut down and erase your work if you simply walk away for a few moments to get a snack.
- If your smart power strip is not shutting down devices that are in standby mode, it's probably not broken. Instead, it is most likely a problem with the voltage sensitivity. Most smart power strips allow you to control the voltage sensitivity, so try adjusting this to see if the strip works correctly.

Installing a smart power strip is a quick and easy way to cut your household expenses. Strategically place these power strips around your home so you can start reaping the financial rewards of a more energy-efficient home!



## Move Over, Save Lives

Every year, workers along the sides of roads are injured or killed when cars crash into authorized emergency vehicles, public service vehicles, and crew sites, even when they are marked with flashing lights, bright cones, or warning signs. According to the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration, incidents involving workers being struck by vehicles is one of the top causes of highway fatalities.

North Carolina, like most states, has a “Move Over” law that was passed to protect police, firefighters, and other first responders, and in recent years, this law was expanded to protect utility and highway workers.

Despite these efforts and others like them across the nation, many drivers simply don’t pay attention. An easy way for drivers to reduce incidents that harm these workers is to remember a slogan—actually, a law— **“Slow down or move over.”**

The law is simple: When approaching an authorized emergency or public service vehicle with amber flashing

lights, drivers must move over when possible. If moving over is not possible or if they are on a two-lane road, drivers must slow down significantly while maintaining a safe speed.

Every worker has the right to work in a safe environment. Remember, slowing down and moving over not only shows common courtesy and respect for the hard work they do, it also saves lives.



### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month:

When was your cooling system last serviced? Most manufacturers recommend an annual tune-up, and March is a great time to schedule this service! A qualified professional can check the amount of refrigerant, condition of belts and motors, and other factors that can greatly impact the efficiency of your system.

Source: Energy.gov





High school seniors have  
▶▶ until March 18, 2022, to apply  
for a **\$1,000 scholarship.**

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# Shoot Your Shot: Don't Miss this Summer Opportunity

Lace-up those sneakers rising sixth and seventh graders! The buzzer will sound soon to apply for a basketball camp scholarship on March 31.

Union Power will send one young man to the Carolina Basketball Camp at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill from June 18-22 and one young woman to the Wolfpack Women's Basketball Camp at North Carolina State University in Raleigh from June 19-22. Campers will work directly with players and coaches to develop basketball skills and practice leadership and teamwork at the overnight sports camps.

## To be eligible for a Touchstone Energy Sports Camp scholarship:

- Students must be in the sixth or seventh grades during the 2022–2023 school year. Students currently in eighth grade are not eligible for the scholarship program, per NCAA rules and regulations.
- Students must have permission from a parent or legal guardian to attend and must provide their own transportation to and from the camp if selected.
- Applicants will be judged on academics, extracurricular activities, and an essay.



Apply today by visiting [union-power.com/sportscampscholarships](https://union-power.com/sportscampscholarships). Applications must be postmarked by March 31. Winners are expected to be announced by the beginning of May.



# Rooted in the Community

## Celebrating National Ag Day

Our Cooperative has come a long way since local farmers, ranchers, and rural families came together to bring electricity and greater opportunities to the region more than 80 years ago. Still, we've remained true to our roots and steadfast in our commitment to supporting, investing in, and strengthening our local communities.

This year, on **March 22**, we celebrate National Agriculture (Ag) Day. We are thankful every day for the contributions farmers have made in our communities. Ag Day is a day when producers, agricultural associations, corporations, universities, government agencies, and countless others across America gather to recognize and celebrate the abundance provided by agriculture.

Agriculture is the backbone of our country and is North Carolina's leading industry. Our livelihood greatly depends on the crops provided by American farmers.

Now more than ever, we salute and honor the men and women who contribute daily to our national prosperity. Thanks to the efficiency of our farmers and ranchers, our rural communities are stronger and more resilient.

We are proud to support farmers' operational needs through safe, reliable, and affordable power. We look forward to growing the relationship between agriculture and energy to create efficiencies that benefit all North Carolina communities.

Thank you again to our farmers, agricultural members, and partners for the vital ways you support our daily lives.





# Surge Protection 101

A power surge is an unexpected increase in voltage, and it can occur from a variety of sources. Regardless of the cause, power surges can majorly damage electronic devices and equipment in your home. Let's take a look at common causes of power surges and how you can protect your sensitive electronics.

## Common Causes of Power Surges

One of the most common causes of a power surge is lightning. Most of us have experienced this during a severe thunderstorm. When lightning strikes an electrical system, the excess current must be channeled somewhere—unfortunately, in many cases, it's sent through a home. Your best bet is to unplug all unused devices and electronics during severe thunderstorms.

Another common cause of power surges is electrical overload. This happens when devices or appliances are plugged into an outlet that can't handle the required amount of voltage, or if multiple devices are plugged into one outlet through an extension cord. Suppose you're experiencing power surges due to electrical overload. It's time to call a qualified electrician to evaluate your home's circuits and electrical needs.

Faulty wiring in a home can also cause power surges. Damaged or exposed wires can cause spikes in voltage, creating a potentially dangerous situation. If you notice signs of faulty wiring, like visible burns on outlets, buzzing sounds from outlets or frequently tripped circuit breakers, your home may be due for electrical wiring repairs and updates.

Surges can also occur after a power outage. Sometimes, when electricity is being restored and reconnected, it's common to experience a quick surge in current. Similar advice for a surge caused by lightning, it's best to unplug sensitive electronics during the outage—then wait to plug them back in after power is fully restored.

## Protect Electronics in Your Home

Aside from unplugging devices when you suspect a power surge, there are two ways you can take additional precautions to protect electronics in your home.

Point-of-use surge protection devices, like power strips, can protect electronics during most surges. But remember, not all power strips include surge protection, so read the packaging label carefully before you buy, and don't overload the power strip with too many devices. You can also install specialized electrical outlets that offer additional surge protection. Talk to a trusted electrician to learn more.



Another option is a whole-home surge protector, which can help protect your home from larger, more powerful surges. In most cases, whole-home suppressors are connected to your home's service panel. They include features like thermal fuses and notification capabilities that indicate when a device has been impacted by a surge. In addition, whole-home surge protection prices vary based on the size of the home and suppressor. Whole-home suppressors should always be connected by a licensed electrician, so consider the cost of installation as well.

Occasional power surges are inevitable, but by unplugging devices when you think a surge may occur and using additional levels of protection like power strips or whole-home suppressors, you can better safeguard your sensitive electronics and devices.

Contact Union Power if you have questions about ways to protect your home from power surges.



## Three Ways to Spruce Up Your Finances

If you are planning a good spring cleaning of your home, your car, or even your life, don't forget to add your finances to that regimen. We recommend dedicating one day of your spring cleaning plans to focus on your financial well-being. Here are three simple tasks to help you get started.

### **1** Become a Member of ElecTel Credit Union.

Get the most out of your spring cleaning and take some time to sit down and comb through your budget. Where are you missing the mark on your savings goals each month? Where can you reallocate funds to other expenses? Cut the clutter and reorganize your finances this season by joining ElecTel Credit Union. ElecTel offers a full range of personalized services designed to meet the financial needs of its members and their families and access to programs such as the Energy-Efficient Loan program, Electric Vehicle Loan program, Auto Loan program, Home Equity Loan program, and more. Visit [electel.org](http://electel.org) to learn more and become a member today!

### **2** Go Paperless and Sign up for E-bill.

Switching to E-bill and online bill pay has many advantages. Probably the best one of all is that it's FREE! Not only can you have your bills delivered electronically, but you can also pay them online without paying a cent for stamps or envelopes.

It's convenient, environmentally friendly, offers greater organization and enhanced security, and can help you safeguard your credit score by ensuring your bills are paid on time through Auto Pay. Visit [union-power.com/member-resources-services/sign-up-for-ebill](http://union-power.com/member-resources-services/sign-up-for-ebill) to enjoy the convenience of having access to your billing information whenever you want, wherever you are.

### **3** Cut costs by saving energy.

Taking a whole-house approach to saving energy ensures that the dollars you invest to save energy are spent wisely. Small changes like switching to LED bulbs, plugging your appliances and electronics into smart power strips to reduce phantom loads, and even using ceiling fans for cooling are all easy ways to cut costs. When it comes to saving energy at home, you'll see that there are many affordable and some no-cost options to keep your energy bill low. Learn more ways to save energy in your home by visiting [union-power.com](http://union-power.com).



# Right-of-Way Clearing

During the next month, you may see our tree-trimming crews in your neighborhood: ABC Professional Tree Services and Lewis Tree Service.

**Stanly County:** Old Aquadale Rd, Dry Rd, Bobwhite Ln, Wrenn Rd, Edgefield Rd, Lorene Dr, Mabry Rd

**Union County:** Cunningham Ln, Rocky River Rd N, Indian Trail Fairview Rd, Ridge Rd, Price Rd, Porter Ridge Campus Dr, Poplin Rd, W Unionville Indian Trail Rd, Eugene Hobbs Rd, Willis Long Rd, Beulah Church Rd, Weddington Matthews Rd, Hemby Rd, Hwy 16, Old Mill Rd, Sherringham Way, Ennis Rd, Santolina Ct, Victoria Lake Dr



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) or Carrie Lorenz-Efird (ext. 3291). Visit [union-power.com](http://union-power.com) for monthly right-of-way clearing updates.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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

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