

# What You Can Do in an Outage

*Power outage FAQ for members*



## MESSAGE FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER ROBERT A. LOTH III

**POWER OUTAGES ARE A FACT OF LIFE**—a disruptive one for co-op employees and members alike. In last month's issue, we described the steps that cooperatives go through to restore power, but our members often wonder what they should do when an outage occurs. Central Texas Electric Cooperative has the answers to some of our members' frequently asked questions.

### **Q: What can I do to help get my power back on quickly?**

**A:** First, check your fuses or circuit breakers, making sure that they have not blown or tripped. Next, call the co-op office and have your account number ready. Let us know if you saw or heard anything, such as sparks, loud noises, or trees or limbs on the power lines. This will help our field crews find the problem more quickly.

### **Q: How do you decide whose power to restore first?**

**A:** The outage restoration process begins at the substation where power is supplied into our distribution system. After these repairs have been made, crews work on the lines serving the greatest number of members until electricity is restored to all main lines. Then crews begin repairing lines to individual members.

### **Q: Why can't you tell me how long it will take to restore my power?**

**A:** Each outage is a result of different circumstances that can make restoration times difficult to predict. During the power restoration process, crews encounter factors that affect the time it takes to find the problem and make the necessary repairs.

### **Q: Why would a crew pass by my house without restoring power?**

**A:** Our No. 1 goal is restoring power to as many members as quickly, safely and efficiently as possible. If you see a service crew pass by without stopping, it could be because crews are working to restore main lines; responding to an emergency; or going past your location to access lines and substations serving your area.

### **Q: Why does my neighbor have power, but I do not?**

**A:** Who is affected by an outage depends upon the cause and location of the problem. If your neighbor has electricity, but you do not, it's likely that you're on separate lines. Also, make sure your power is not out because of a tripped breaker at your home.

### **Q: Is a generator safe to use when I lose power?**

**A:** A generator can be a wonderful tool during an outage, but it can also be extremely dangerous if used improperly. Without a transfer switch, a generator is a fire hazard if it's on line when electricity is restored. Improper connection of a generator also endangers service crews working to restore power. If used without ventilation, generators can cause deadly carbon monoxide poisoning.

### **Q: What about members with special medical needs?**

**A:** In case of extended outages, members who require electricity for health care should have an emergency backup plan, such as moving to an alternative location, using a portable generator or installing battery backup for medical equipment. Please call our offices at 1-800-900-2832 if you have a critical medical need for electricity, or if you have questions about outages.



## Check CO Alarm During Heating Season

**IT'S STILL COLD OUTSIDE**, and all your windows and doors are closed. This makes heating season a perfect time to make sure the carbon monoxide detectors in your house are working properly. If you don't have any, it's time to install them.

Carbon monoxide is a potential byproduct of burning fossil fuels including gas and oil. It's colorless and odorless, but it's potently toxic and can cause everything from dizziness to death.

### **Stay safe this winter by taking a few precautions:**

- ▶ Install a carbon monoxide alarm outside of every bedroom and one on every level of your house.
- ▶ Replace batteries in the alarm at least twice a year. While you're at it, change the batteries in your smoke alarms, too.
- ▶ If you notice any warning signs that carbon monoxide is at harmful levels in your home—the air is stuffy and stale; condensation appears on windows; burner flames turn yellow; pilot lights flutter or extinguish—turn appliances off and open the windows. Call a natural gas contractor to inspect the equipment.
- ▶ Properly maintain your furnace, boiler vents and chimneys.

# Space Heater Safety

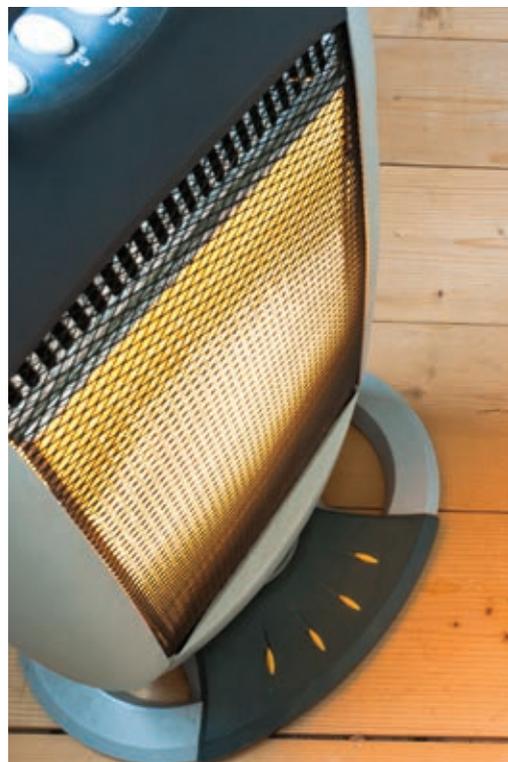
**SPACE HEATERS CAN BE A QUICK** way to heat up a room. However, they can be as dangerous as they are convenient if used improperly. Space heaters cause 25,000 home fires and 6,000 emergency room visits a year, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

Approximately one-third of all house fires nationwide happen during the home-heating months between December and February. Equipment intended to add a little extra warmth, such as space heaters, is the leading cause of winter fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Unvented kerosene heaters are especially dangerous and illegal in some states.

Central Texas Electric Cooperative urges everyone in the home to understand the importance of using space heaters safely.

**Heed the following precautions when using electric space heaters:**

**1.** Purchase only space heaters that have been tested for safety and approved by Underwriters Laboratories or other reputable testing labs.



**2.** Make sure the unit is equipped with an emergency tip-over shutoff feature and heating-element guards.

**3.** Read and follow all of the manufacturer's instructions for operation and care.

**4.** Before using a space heater, make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors work.

**5.** Check to make sure the heater is clean and in good condition, and have all problems professionally repaired before using.

**6.** Space heaters have one purpose: to provide supplemental heating. Never use them to thaw pipes, cook food or dry clothing or towels.

**7.** Remember to keep space heaters at least 3 feet from combustible liquids such as fuel, spray cans and paint, as well as flammable materials such as draperies, blankets and sofas.

**8.** Never allow pets or children near an electric heater. Accidental contact could result in a shock or burn.

**9.** Do not overload circuits. Never use extension cords or multiple plugs with a space heater, and make sure the unit is not plugged into the same circuit as other electric appliances.

**10.** If your space heater is plugged into a ground-fault circuit interrupter that trips, don't assume there is something wrong with the GFCI. Immediately stop using the heater until a professional can check it—otherwise, a shock could occur.

**11.** Never leave space heaters unattended. Turn off your space heater and unplug it before leaving the room or going to bed.

**12.** Replace older space heaters with newer, safer models.

## Central Texas Electric Cooperative

**Fredericksburg (headquarters)**

386 Friendship Lane  
Fredericksburg, TX 78624

**Llano**

1410 E. St. Hwy. 29, Llano

**Kingsland**

Nob Hill Subdivision  
706 Cottonwood St., Kingsland

**Mason**

1881 E. State Highway 29, Mason

**Office Hours**

8 a.m.–5 p.m., Monday–Friday

**Website**

ctec.coop

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Robert A. Loth III

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

James Low, President, *San Saba County*  
Jack Asbill, Vice President, *Mason County*  
Doyle Bode, Secretary, *Gillespie County*  
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Charles E. Pearson, *Gillespie County*  
W.C. "Dub" Stewart, *Llano County*

## Emergency Contact

To report electric service interruptions, please call the Central Texas Electric Cooperative office in your area at the numbers listed below:

**FREDERICKSBURG AREA**

**(830) 997-2126**

**1-800-900-CTEC (2832)**

including Gillespie, Kendall, Kerr, Blanco, Real and Kimble counties

**LLANO AND SAN SABA AREAS**

**(325) 247-4191**

**THE LAKES AREA**

**(325) 388-4542**

8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**(325) 247-4191**

after business hours

**MASON AREA**

**(325) 347-6314**

including McCulloch, Menard and Kimble counties

# Deadline Approaches for District Meeting Ballot

**THE MARCH 15 DEADLINE** is approaching for Central Texas Electric Cooperative members who are interested in running for a seat on the cooperative's board of directors. Those members interested in becoming a director candidate must meet bylaws requirements, reside in the area served by the cooperative, and receive electric service in the district where they are seeking to be placed on the ballot at the district meetings in June.

In adherence with CTEC bylaws, any member interested in a director nomination must submit a completed application and a petition signed by at least 10 cooperative members within the district where they are seeking nomination. Members who do not deliver an application and petition before the March 15 deadline will not be eligible to be named a district meeting nominee, as the bylaws do not allow nominations from the floor.

CTEC's Credentials and Election Committee, which is composed of cooperative members, will review each application and petition. Individuals whose applications and petitions are approved and verified will be listed on the district meeting notice that is mailed to all cooperative members in the district in question.

The deadline for submitting the required materials is 5 p.m., Wednesday, March 15, in the co-op's headquarters office in Fredericksburg. However, members wishing to be placed on the ballot are urged to turn in the necessary items as soon as possible. The earlier a member turns in their submission, the more time CTEC staff members have to review the material and determine whether all requirements are met—and give the potential candidates the opportunity to resolve any errors or oversights before the deadline expires.

If an application is received after the March 15 deadline, it will not be considered. Potential candidates also are encouraged to obtain petition signatures from more than the minimum 10 members, in the event that one or more of the signatures is not recognized as valid by the Credentials and Election Committee.

Applications and petition forms are available at the CTEC headquarters office in Fredericksburg. To have one mailed or emailed to you, or if you have questions about the director election process, please call the cooperative's toll-free number at 1-800-900-2832, or locally in Fredericksburg at (830) 997-2126.

**Interested in running for a seat on the CTEC Board of Directors? The deadline to submit materials is March 15.**



STEVE DEBENPORT | ISTOCK.COM

## Study Up for Home Safety

**WHY IS THERE A DIFFERENT KIND** of outlet in my bathroom? Why does the circuit breaker trip whenever my portable air conditioner comes on? What's the difference between a power strip and a surge protector?

Do you know everything you should about your home's electrical system and appliances? If you're like most people, the answer is probably "No." It's time to change that.

Commissioning an inspection of your home's electrical system not only can identify problems but also can help familiarize you with its basic electrical elements and needs.

Many of the conditions that cause electrical fires and incidents can be detected during a home electrical system inspection. You should have an electrical system inspection if:

- ▶ Your home is 40 years old or older.
- ▶ You purchase a previously owned home.
- ▶ Your home has undergone a major renovation.
- ▶ You have added new major appliances within the past 10 years.

Learn to identify potential electrical hazards and correct them. Understanding your home's electric system and making a few easy changes to improve safety also can lead to savings on your utility bills.

Is your home ready for the challenge?

NURULANGA | ISTOCKPHOTO | THINKSTOCK

# CTEC College Scholarship Deadline Draws Near

**COMPLETED SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS** must be submitted to Central Texas Electric Cooperative's Fredericksburg office by 5 p.m., Friday, February 24. This year, CTEC is offering 25 \$1,000 college scholarships, bringing the combined amount of financial help awarded to area students over the program's 19-year history to \$534,000!

Scholarships will be awarded based upon each applicant's eligibility and will be granted to students who attend a recognized Texas institution of higher education. Recipients must carry a minimum of 12 hours or be considered by the registrar to be a full-time student. All scholarships will be mailed directly to the financial aid office of the selected school for the fall 2017 semester.

A scholarship selection committee, appointed by the Board of Directors of Central Texas Electric Cooperative, will choose candidates and alternates for the 25 scholarships to be awarded.

Applicants must be active members or immediate family whose primary residence is served by CTEC. The electric service must be in the name of the applicant or the applicant's parent or guardian. These scholarships are not just for high school students but any age students planning to further their educations.

Applicants must be of good character, as evidenced by at least two letters of recommendation from teachers, principals, counselors, etc., from the school they currently attend. For applicants returning to school after an extended absence, recommendation letters will be accepted from previous employers, supervisors, ministers, etc. Applicants must demonstrate a coherent degree plan and willingness to pursue a course of higher learning.

For high school seniors, CTEC has sent information to many area schools where CTEC has meters. Applications are also available at all CTEC offices and also can be downloaded from the co-op's website at [ctec.coop](http://ctec.coop). Questions can be directed to Patricia Stehling in Fredericksburg at 1-800-900-2832 or (830) 997-2126.



## RECIPE OF THE MONTH



ALISAFAROV | ISTOCK.COM

## Honey Cheese Bacon Chicken

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup honey
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup Dijon or creole mustard
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon lemon pepper, or more to taste
- 4 slices bacon, cut in half
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella or provolone cheese

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Apply cooking spray to a metal baking dish. Pound chicken breast halves to an even thickness.
2. Mix together honey, mustard and lemon pepper in a small dish. Place the breast halves in baking dish and drizzle evenly with the honey-mustard mixture.
3. Bake chicken 25 minutes, then top each breast half with 2 bacon pieces and increase oven heat to 400. Continue baking about 7-8 minutes.
4. Top with cheese and bake another 3 minutes or until chicken juices run clear, bacon is crisp and cheese is bubbly. Serve with brown or white rice.

This recipe won the *Five Ingredients or Fewer* contest in September 2015. Submit your *Texas Gulf Shrimp* recipe to *Texas Co-op Power* by February 10 for a chance to win \$100 and be published. Visit [texascooppower.com/contests](http://texascooppower.com/contests).

Find this and more delicious recipes online at  
**TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM**

# Lower Thermostat To Lower Bills

*Energy efficiency helps avoid high bills*

**TEXAS WINTERS ARE UNPREDICTABLE.** Cold weather often requires folks to use more electricity than normal to keep the house warm. Consequently, you might already have received a higher bill this winter—and you might be wondering how to avoid the next one.

As we endure the last of the Texas winter (we hope), you and your family can still adjust your energy behaviors to cut your electric bills.

To help avoid higher-than-normal energy bills, Central Texas Electric Cooperative encourages you to use electricity efficiently. Setting the thermostat to 68 degrees when home—and lower when you're away—saves money. The U.S. Department of Energy reports that lowering the thermostat 10–15 degrees for eight hours a day can trim heating bills 5–15 percent.

**Other tips to reduce energy use:**

- ▶ Turn off and unplug non-essential lights and appliances.
- ▶ Close shades and blinds at night to reduce heat loss through windows. Open them on sunny days to capture solar heat.
- ▶ If possible, avoid using inefficient and costly backup electric resistance heating and space heaters.

▶ Change furnace filters often.

**Long-term home repairs and upgrades that save energy:**

- ▶ Install and set programmable thermostats.
- ▶ Seal air leaks around doors, windows, plumbing, wiring and any other places where air can infiltrate.
- ▶ Ensure that exterior walls and attics contain the recommended amount and type of insulation.

At Central Texas Electric Cooperative, we provide more ways for our members to monitor their usage and prevent high bills. We can review your account and find patterns to pinpoint how usage might be adding up.



ALENA OZEROVA | ISTOCK.COM

**Bundle up this winter and save on heating bills.**

You also can monitor your usage yourself on our SmartHub app and compare that usage to daily temperatures. If you want to avoid a surprise bill, we can see if your account qualifies for budget billing, which means you would pay the same price each month. Just remember that if larger bills do arise, we can arrange a payment plan that will fit your budget.



ALEX POTEMKIN | ISTOCK.COM

## Alterations Make Your Fireplace More Efficient

**EVEN IF YOU LOVE THE CRACKLE** and warmth of a wood-burning fire on the hearth, you probably could live without the added cost to your energy bill.

Sure, the flickering flames make you feel warm while you're sitting nearby, but wood-burning fires are not efficient. They emit little or no warmth into a room and send warm air up the chimney.

Wood-burning fires also can create particles that pollute the air indoors and outdoors, and could poison the house with carbon monoxide.

That doesn't mean you have to close your fireplace up forever, though. Instead, try improving the efficiency and safety of your beloved hearth:

**Close the fireplace damper** when you're not burning wood. This will cut down on the loss of warm room air through the chimney.

**Cover the front of the fireplace** with tempered glass doors, which seal the fireplace opening and prevent air in the room from escaping through it. Fireplace inserts are another option for converting fireplaces into efficient heating systems.

**Hire a professional to sweep** your chimney.

**Use artificial manufactured logs**, which reduce pollutant emissions by almost 80 percent.

**Replace wood with electric "logs"** that you can insert into the fireplace, or plug in an electric fireplace instead of burning wood.



Central Texas Electric Co-op

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 



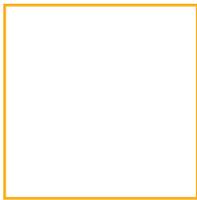
Energy Explorers

# Energy Sources Activity

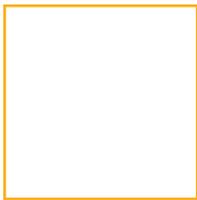
Did you know Americans use electricity that is generated from different fuel sources? Some fuel sources are renewable, meaning they harness natural energy from the Earth's resources, and some are non-renewable, meaning they use fossil fuels.

Do you know which energy sources are renewable and non-renewable? Use safety scissors to cut out the images below and place them in the correct row. Use the answer key to check your work.

## Renewable Sources



## Non-Renewable Sources



Answers: Renewable Sources: Hydro, Wind, Biomass, Solar Non-renewable Sources: Natural Gas, Nuclear, Coal, Oil

