

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Outdated wiring and overloaded circuits are the most common causes of electrical fires.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 in 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ELECTRICAL WIRING: Outdated wiring is another common cause of electrical fires.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 If you suspect your home's wiring is outdated, leave this one to the pros and contact a qualified electrician.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: 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.



MEMBER SERVICES

ONLINE ACCOUNT INFORMATION

Visit ClayElectric.com to access your account information:

- View current charges & account balance
- View past bill statements/account history
- Make a one-time payment online
- Sign up for Average Billing Plan
- View estimated meter reading dates
- Request emailed bill statements (Clay eBill)
- Sign up for automatic monthly payments

OPERATION ROUND UP — Operation Round Up is a program to generate and collect voluntary donations that are used to benefit organizations in Clay Electric's service area for the purpose of improving the quality of life of our members and their communities. Participating members' electric bills are rounded up to the next dollar amount. The funds are placed in a separate account to be allocated by the Clay Electric Foundation.

PROJECT SHARE — Help others by designating a tax-deductible amount to be added to your electric bill or make a one-time donation.

ENERGY SMART REBATE PROGRAM — Offers rebates for members who install additional insulation in their homes, or who install a high efficiency heat pump or solar water heating system.

SURGEBLASTER — High quality surge protection equipment at a low price.

CO-OP CONNECTIONS CARD — A national discount card program. It offers 10-60 percent discounts on prescription drugs at participating pharmacies, as well as special discounts and deals!

METER ACCESS — Clay Electric's AMI meters include technology allowing them to be read without physical access to the meter. These meters improve meter reading efficiencies and accuracy, but even with remote reading capabilities, the member is responsible for keeping the meter clear of obstructions and providing the co-op with access to the meter.

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The Clay Electric Cooperative, Inc. _____

Power Line

August 2020

2 scholarships are available for adults

If you are an adult in school or returning to college, you may want to consider applying for a Clay Electric scholarship.

For more than 20 years, the co-op has given scholarships to high school seniors to assist them with their higher education goals. Now, the co-op has two \$1,500 "Back to Your Future Scholarships."

This scholarship program is limited to any student/applicant, age 22 or older, who meets the following criteria:

- Home/residence must be served by Clay Electric
- Applicant cannot be a previous winner of a Clay Electric Scholarship
- Applicant has earned a High School Diploma or GED Completion Certificate prior to the application

• Applicant must be registered at and/or attending an accredited college or trade school for the Spring 2021 semester

Two scholarships are available and will be awarded based on need; leadership and/or community service; and educational goals and career plans. The application deadline is Sept. 18.

Please visit ClayElectric.com or your district office for an application.



Report from
the manager

Ricky Davis
General Manager/CEO



Electricity brings value

Even though I work in the electric power industry, like most people, I sometimes don't think about the electricity I use.

I expect the lights to turn on when I flip the switch and the coffeemaker to work each morning. Because electricity is so abundant, we don't think much about it.

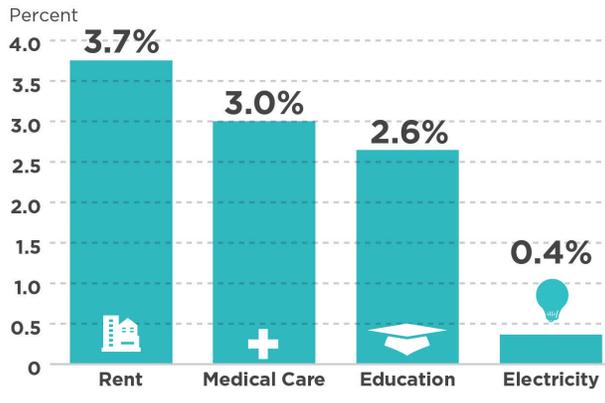
Since many of us have been spending more time at home over the past few months, we have likely been using more energy. And yet, we still expect an endless supply of power with uninterrupted service 24/7. The only time we really think about electricity is when the power goes out or perhaps when the monthly bill arrives.

Given how electricity powers our modern lifestyle every day, it's a great value, especially when compared to other common services and expenses. For example, think back to the cost of a gallon of gasoline 20 years ago. Consider the cost of groceries or a cup of your favorite specialty coffee from a few years back. In comparison, the cost of electricity has remained largely flat, unlike most other consumer goods.

Like many of you, I have a cell phone to stay connected, and I subscribe to cable channels so I can enjoy more viewing options. Many of us consider these necessities for modern day life. We can see what we're getting for our money, and we pay the price for those services. In contrast, when we use electricity, we don't necessarily "see" all we're getting for our money.

But considering what electricity does for us, it's a tremendous value for our quality of life as well as our budgets. For comparison, consider

Average Annual Price Increase 2014-2019



the average rent increase was nearly 4 percent (from 2014-2019) according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI). The cost of health care increased 3 percent during this time, and education was not too far behind at 2.6 percent. So, where did electricity rank? According to the CPI, electricity increased by less than half a percentage point, 0.4 percent.

The bottom line: electricity brings everyday value. In fact, Clay Electric members experience very few extended outages each year. Considering electricity is something we all use around the clock, I'm very proud of our track record. At the same time, we are striving to increase our service reliability, reduce those interruptions and lower costs. We are continually working to improve our operations to ensure a smarter grid and exploring more renewable energy options where possible.

Clay Electric provides the reliable service you expect and deserve as valued members of the co-op. And as your trusted energy adviser, we want to help you save energy and money.

We recognize the past few months have been challenging for many of our members and we're here to help. If you have questions about your account or are looking for ways to save energy at home, please give us a call at 1-800-224-4917 or visit ClayElectric.com.

We are your electric co-op and our sole purpose is to serve you and the needs of our communities. That's everyday value.

Placing signs on our poles is dangerous

A simple poster or birdhouse may not look like a threat, but when it's affixed to a power pole it can be very dangerous.

It's also illegal. National Electric Safety Codes state no items shall be attached to utility poles without approval from the owner/operator. Posting a sign or object can carry a fine of up to \$500 per day.

You may be thinking, "What's the harm of putting up one sign?" What you may not realize is that the nails, tacks and screws that remain in the pole after the sign has been discarded present a dangerous climbing hazard for utility lineworkers. These are unexpected obstacles for our crews, especially at night.

The sharp objects can tear the rubber gear that protects lineworkers from electrical shocks and burns. When working around lethal voltages, it only takes a pinhole in a protective rubber glove or sleeve to let in enough electricity to kill or seriously injure someone working on an energized power line.

Clay Electric's poles also shouldn't be used to hang flags, mailboxes, satellite dishes, basketball backstops or similar objects. These create climbing obstacles and safety hazards for our crews.

Part of Clay Electric's mission is to provide safe electricity for our members and employees. You can help us by not placing signs or any other item on our poles. We appreciate your cooperation.

Power Line is an informational publication of Clay Electric Cooperative, Inc. It is distributed monthly with members' billing statements. If you have questions or comments about Power Line, write Editor Justin Caudell at P.O. Box 308, Keystone Heights, FL 32656; or email: Jcaudell@clayelectric.com. Clay Electric's Board of Trustees will meet at noon Thursday, Aug. 27 and Thursday, Sept. 24 in Keystone Heights.