



Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative

## SEDGWICK COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# currentnews

### Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative

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### FROM THE MANAGER

## Save a Life: Avoid Distractions While Driving



**Scott Ayres**

Some temptations are hard to resist. For me, it can be especially challenging to turn down that last piece of chocolate cake.

While driving, we typically hear that “ding” on our phone, alerting us to a text or call coming through, and we sometimes feel the urgent need to check it. We know we shouldn’t, but we reason that we’re going to make an exception — just this once.

So, why do we indulge in behavior we know to be wrong, dangerous and in many states, illegal? Call it hubris. Ac-

cording to AAA research, most people feel they are better-than-average drivers. After all, we have busy lives and are accustomed to multitasking. But mounds of research and thousands of deaths every year prove otherwise.

August is Back to School Safety Month. As a new school year begins with young drivers and school buses back on the road, I thought it would be a good time to remind folks, including myself, of the dangers of distracted driving.

The reality is that using a phone while driving creates enormous potential for injuries and fatalities. Distractions take a motorist’s attention off driving, which can make a driver miss critical events,

*Continued on page 12B ►*

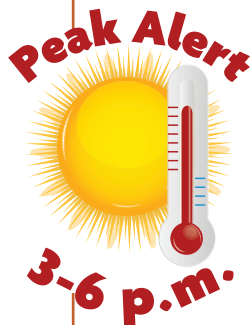
## PLAY IT SAFE. THAT TEXT CAN WAIT.



**If it’s an emergency, pull over before answering the phone.**

## Help Your Electric Co-op Control Cost

*Avoid Using Energy from 3-6 p.m.*



August and September are the last two months of our load management season. It is still important to monitor your usage during peak times between 3 and 6 p.m. on days where the temperature reaches 95 degrees or more.

Please consider using major appliances, such as the washer and dryer in the morning or later in the evening. When preparing dinner, remember that slow cookers and other small appliances consume less electricity. Grilling on those hotter days is another way to reduce your electrical usage. Working together and using energy wisely will help to keep our costs down and the electric rates stable.

## Save a Life: Avoid Distractions While Driving

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objects and cues, potentially leading to a crash.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, one of every 10 fatal crashes in the U.S. involves distracted driving, resulting in more than 3,000 deaths annually. I find this statistic heartbreaking considering so many of these accidents could easily be avoided if we had simply put down our phones while driving.

Distracted driving is considered any activity that diverts our attention, including texting or talking on the phone, and adjusting the navigation or entertainment system. Texting is by far one of the most dangerous distractions. Sending or reading one text takes your eyes off the road for an average of 5 seconds. At 55 mph, that's like driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed.

In addition to refraining from texting while driving, we can help keep the roads safe by moving over for first responders and other emergency vehicles. Additionally, if you see utility crews conducting work near the roadside, I'd encourage you to move over when possible and give them extra space to perform their work safely.

At Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative, safety is foremost in everything we do — for our employees and the members of the communities we serve. We routinely remind our crews of the dangers of distracted driving, and we hope you'll have similar conversations with your teens who may be new to the roadways and are especially susceptible to the lure of technology.

Let's work together to keep everyone safe on the roads. Remember: that text can wait and waiting just might save a life.

## Sending a Child to College? Discuss Safety First.

As you are shopping for dorm room supplies, décor, snacks, and other back-to-campus items, take a moment to discuss safety tips with your child before hugs and goodbyes.

Here are some safety topics to help keep your college student safe.

### Electrical Safety Tips

- ▶ When shopping for items that run on electricity, look for a safety endorsement label, such as UL (Underwriters Laboratories).
- ▶ Do not put a cellphone under a pillow or place it on or under bedding. It could overheat or catch fire.
- ▶ In the dorm or apartment, make sure outlets near water sources are equipped with ground fault circuit

interrupters (GFCIs). If they are not, contact the resident assistant, campus housing staff or landlord. Look for a test and reset button on the face of the outlet.

- ▶ Use power strips with an over-current protector that will shut off power if too much current is drawn.
- ▶ Avoid overloading extension cords, power strips or outlets.
- ▶ Do not hang decorative lights with nails or tacks; always use plastic hooks.
- ▶ Do not run electrical cords across traffic paths or under rugs.

### General Safety Tips

- ▶ Find out what type of public safety department is on campus and how

it functions; ask which services the department offers and the steps it takes to prevent crime.

- ▶ Locate emergency call buttons or phones across campus in case of an emergency.
- ▶ Walk with a friend, especially at night.
- ▶ When attending events or parties, go with at least one person you know and trust. If your friend leaves, do not stay.
- ▶ Always be aware of your surroundings.
- ▶ Avoid being distracted (listening to music, texting, and so on) while walking on campus.
- ▶ Find out what types of mental health services or counseling the campus offers.

## 2022 Election Dates

### Your Vote is Your Voice

**August 2**

Primary Election

**October 18**

Deadline to register to vote for General Election

**October 19**

First day advance by mail ballots are mailed and advance in-person voting may begin

**November 1**

Deadline for voters to apply for advance mail ballot

**November 8**

General Election

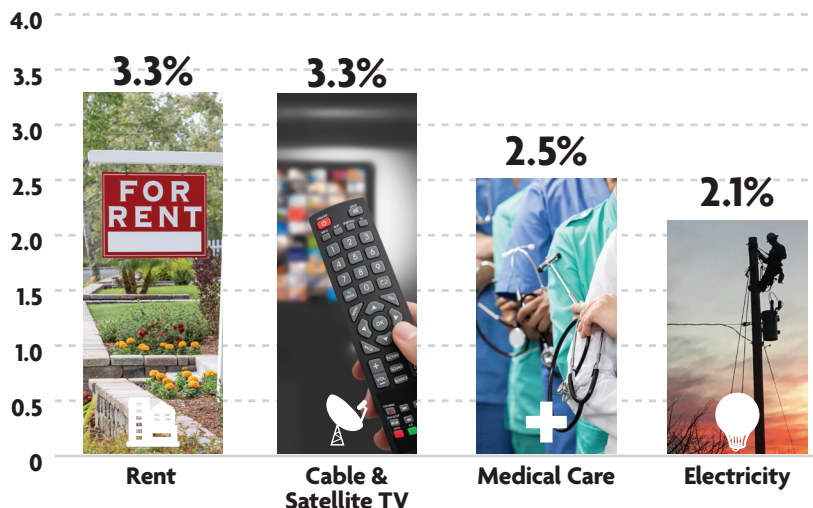


## ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value.

### Average Annual Price Increase 2016-2021

Percent



SOURCES: U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS & CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

## CAMPUS SAFETY TIPS

Every College Student Should Know

Relay these safety tips to your young adults who are campus bound for the first time or returning for another year.

- 1 Do not overload electrical outlets, power strips or extension cords. Use power strips with an overcurrent protector.
- 2 Be aware of your surroundings, especially when listening to music or texting.
- 3 Unplug small appliances when not in use and all appliances when away for extended periods.
- 4 Never walk alone at night.
- 5 Avoid using generic charging cubes or cords. They could overheat, shock or burn you.
- 6 Locate the emergency call buttons or phones across campus in case of an emergency.
- 7 Do not put your cellphone on or under your pillow or bedding. It could overheat or catch fire.



## 5 Healthy Habits to Reduce Stress

Between work, family obligations and a constantly changing world, people in the United States are stressed. In fact, U.S. workers are among the most stressed in the world, according to a State of the Global Workplace study. While some stress is unavoidable and can be good for you, constant or chronic stress can have real consequences for your mental and physical health.

Chronic stress can increase your lifetime risk of heart disease and stroke. It can also lead to unhealthy habits like overeating, physical inactivity and smoking while also increasing risk factors, including high blood pressure, depression, and anxiety. However, a scientific statement from the American Heart Association shows reducing stress and cultivating a positive mindset can improve health and well-being.

To help people understand the connection between stress and physical health, the American Heart Association offers these science-backed insights to help reduce chronic stress.

### Stay Active

Exercise is one of the easiest ways to keep your body healthy and release stress. Physical activity is linked to lower risk of diseases, stronger bones and muscles, improved mental health and cognitive function and lower risk of depression. It can also help increase energy and improve quality of sleep. The American Heart Association recommends adults get at least 150 minutes

per week of moderate-intensity activity, 75 minutes of vigorous activity or a combination.

### Meditate

Incorporate meditation and mindfulness practices into your day to give yourself a few minutes to create some distance from daily stress. Some studies show meditation can reduce blood pressure, improve sleep, support the immune system and increase your ability to process information.

### Practice Positivity

A positive mindset can improve overall health. Studies show a positive mindset can help you live longer, and happy individuals tend to sleep better, exercise more, eat better and not smoke. Practice positive self-talk to help you stay calm. Instead of saying, “everything is going wrong,” re-frame the situation and remind yourself “I can handle this if I take it one step at a time.”

### Show Gratitude

Gratitude — or thankfulness — is a powerful tool that can reduce levels of depression and anxiety and improve sleep. Start by simply writing down three things you're grateful for each day.

### Find a Furry Friend

Having a pet may help you get more fit; lower stress, blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar; and boost overall happiness and well-being. When you

## A scientific statement from the American Heart Association shows reducing stress and cultivating a positive mindset can improve health and well-being.

see, touch, hear or talk to companion animals, you may feel a sense of goodwill, joy, nurturing, and happiness. At the same time, stress hormones are suppressed. Dog ownership is also associated with a lower risk of depression, according to research published by the American Heart Association. Find more stress-management tips at [Heart.org/stress](http://Heart.org/stress).

### Stress 101

Understanding stress is an important step in managing and reducing it. Consider these things to know about stress and how it could affect your life:

- ▶ Today, 1 in 3 adults in the U.S. report being worried or depressed.
- ▶ Higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol are linked to increased risk of high blood pressure and cardiovascular events like heart disease and stroke.
- ▶ The top sources of stress are money, work, family responsibilities and health concerns.

Work-related stress is associated with a 40% increased risk of cardiovascular disease like heart attack and stroke.



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

An easy way to save energy is to seal air leaks and holes where plumbing pipes run through walls in your home. You can also check wall-mounted cabinets for plumbing holes or air gaps in the back. Fill any holes or gaps with spray foam. Wear protective gloves and use a damp rag for cleanup.

SOURCE: [WWW.ENERGY.GOV](http://WWW.ENERGY.GOV)

