



SEDGWICK COUNTY
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

currentnews

SEDGWICK COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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FROM THE MANAGER

Do Not Overlook Overhead Power Lines

It can be easy to overlook things that we see every day, including overhead power lines. However, failure to notice overhead lines can be deadly. If you or an object you are touching contacts or gets too close to a power line, you could be seriously injured or killed.

Overhead power lines require 20 feet of clearance in all directions. This distance rule applies to the power lines draped from pole to pole that line roads (distribution lines), as well as the drop-down lines that service homes or other structures.

If your job requires you to operate

equipment in the vicinity of large transmission lines and towers, they require even more clearance than distribution and drop-down lines. That clearance is determined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). OSHA mandates line clearance distances for all types of power lines.

Be mindful of overhead power lines when completing the following tasks:



Scott Ayres

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WRIGHT RETIRES AFTER 19 YEARS OF SERVICE

ROSE WRIGHT retired on March 1 after 19 dedicated years with the cooperative. Wright began her career with Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative in December 2004 as the Billing Assistant. She was promoted to Billing Specialist in February 2015, the position she held at her retirement.

Wright says now every day is a Saturday. She and her husband, Buck, have two grandchildren that live in Oklahoma, who are active in sports. Now, they will be able to see more of their activities and games.

A breakfast reception was held Friday, March 1, to celebrate her service to the cooperative.

We at Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative want to congratulate Rose on her well-deserved retirement and thank her for 19 dedicated years of service.



From left: Sedgwick County Manager Scott Ayres, Rose Wright, and Office Manager Lora Alloway celebrate Rose's 19 years of service.

Stay Safe at Work

Employers usually offer orientation and training for new employees, but sometimes electrical safety is overlooked. Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative and Safe Electricity remind you of the following on-the-job electrical safety tips, which can also apply at home:

IN GENERAL

- ▶ Do not complete electrical work if you are not qualified. Employees asked to change light fixtures, repair wiring, install outlets or other types of electrical work have been injured and killed on the job. It is best to leave electrical work to a professional electrician.

INDOORS

- ▶ Many offices have landlines. Do not talk on a landline phone during a thunderstorm. Many people think this is a myth but it is not — a bolt of lightning that strikes a telephone line can come through the wires and enter a headset. That jolt can burst your eardrum or even cause cardiac arrest.
- ▶ Use high-quality extension cords with appropriate gauge and length endorsed by a reputable laboratory.
- ▶ Do not run extension cords under carpet. Out of sight, out of mind, and the cords could get damaged under the carpet or overheat, causing a fire.
- ▶ Extension cords should only be used as a temporary solution.
- ▶ Electrical cords can be a tripping hazard.
- ▶ Do not overload the electrical system at your work by plugging in too many items or plugging in items that draw too much power.
- ▶ Speaking of drawing too much power, ask before using a space heater at work.
- ▶ Do not use damaged cords, plugs, outlets, or outdated electrical equipment.

- ▶ Do not yank on an electrical cord to unplug something; grasp the plug instead.

OUTDOORS

- ▶ If you are working outdoors, be vigilant about power line locations. Window washers, roofers, painters, and other workers have been injured and killed after making contact with power lines either with a tool, an object they were holding, or by direct contact.
- ▶ If your employer asks you to trim trees, do not trim any foliage or limbs within 20 feet of a power line in any direction. Trimming near power lines should be left to OSHA-certified line clearance workers.
- ▶ If you operate farm machinery or drive a truck that has hydraulic beds or lifts (dump truck, for example), bins (grain truck) or arms/extensions (garbage truck, concrete truck), always be aware of power line locations and use a spotter. Contact with a power line can kill. If your truck, tractor, or equipment does come in contact with a line, DO NOT get out. Call 911 and wait for your electric co-op to de-energize the power so you can safely exit.
- ▶ If you use scaffolding or a boom lift to raise you up, always be aware of power line locations.

AROUND WATER

- ▶ Be careful when working around water. Water and electricity should not mix, because it greatly increases the chance of shock. Keep all electrical equipment away from standing water or damp conditions (indoors or outdoors) and do not operate equipment with wet hands.
- ▶ Make sure any outlet near a water source (and all outdoor outlets) are ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protected.

For more information about electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.

5 WAYS TO SAVE THIS SUMMER

When summer temperatures rise, so do our energy bills. Here are a few ways you can reduce energy use and grow your summer savings.



- ▶ **RAISE YOUR THERMOSTAT.** The smaller the difference between the indoor and outdoor temperatures, the more you'll save.
- ▶ **INSTALL WINDOW COVERINGS** like blinds or light-blocking curtains to prevent indoor heat gain during the day.
- ▶ **SEAL LEAKS WITH CAULK AND WEATHERSTRIPPING** around windows and exterior doors. Air leaks force your air conditioner to work harder and run longer than necessary.
- ▶ **RUN CEILING FANS** for additional cooling but turn them off when you leave the room.
- ▶ **LOWER YOUR WATER HEATER** thermostat to 120 degrees to reduce standby heat loss.

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Power up Your Lawn Care With Electric Equipment

The landscape of lawn and garden care is evolving, and electric equipment is at the forefront of this change. While electric lawn tools are not new, advancements in technology and more options mean prices have become more competitive, making electric equipment an accessible option for many consumers.

BENEFITS OF ELECTRIC EQUIPMENT

Electric lawnmowers have come a long way since the days of extension cords tethering you to an outlet. Battery-powered mowers offer the same freedom of movement as gas-powered models but with reduced noise and maintenance.

Battery life was once a major drawback to making the switch to electric lawn tools. But today's growing demand for electric equipment has resulted in major advancements for lithium-ion batteries, making them more dependable, cost-effective and efficient. For most consumers, electric lawn tools can get the job done just as well as gas-powered models.

Many electric mowers offer push-button starts, and because they are lighter, they are easier to maneuver around tight turns. Improved batteries provide longer run times to tackle larger spaces. Like their gas-powered counterparts, electric mowers are available in push, self-propelled/walk-behind and riding models. And there is no need to refill gas cans or change oil and air filters, resulting in less hassle and maintenance.

Like mowers, electric blowers, string

trimmers and chain saws have fewer moving parts, require minimal maintenance and are quieter. Because electric tools are generally lighter in weight, they're also more ergonomic and easier to maneuver. This feature is especially handy for projects that require tools like chain saws for precise work.

CHOOSE ELECTRIC EQUIPMENT TO MEET YOUR NEEDS

Electric lawn tools have some limitations, so the size and terrain of your outdoor space are important considerations when purchasing new equipment. When comparing gas-powered and electric mowers, consider the torque rating — this is the driving force behind a blade's rotation.

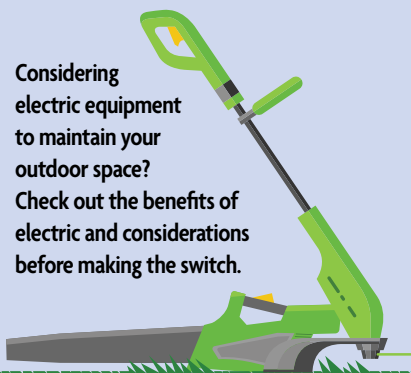
On average, electric lawnmowers generate less torque than gas mowers. If you have a challenging outdoor space that includes overgrown brush, tall grass, or hills and dips, torque is a key factor.

Choosing the right type and size mower is particularly important for spaces larger than half an acre. If you have a large property, consider purchasing an extra battery to ensure uninterrupted workflow.

Many manufacturers offer interchangeable batteries and chargers, providing flexibility and convenience. Choosing a single brand can ensure charging compatibility across your lawn tools and streamline charging.

While both gas and electric lawn tools can get the job done, electric equipment generally requires less maintenance, is less expensive to operate and is kinder to the environment.

Making the Switch to ELECTRIC LAWN EQUIPMENT



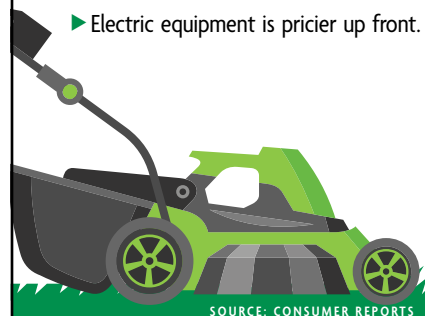
Considering electric equipment to maintain your outdoor space? Check out the benefits of electric and considerations before making the switch.

BENEFITS OF ELECTRIC EQUIPMENT

- ▶ Battery-powered equipment produces zero emissions.
- ▶ No hassle and mess from gasoline and oil.
- ▶ Quieter and more reliable than gas-powered equipment.
- ▶ Requires less energy to do the same amount of work as gas-powered tools.

CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE GOING ELECTRIC

- ▶ Purchasing from a single brand can streamline charging.
- ▶ Consider the size of your property and battery run time.
- ▶ Backup batteries may be needed for larger properties.
- ▶ Electric equipment is pricier up front.



SOURCE: CONSUMER REPORTS



Controlling a Controlled Burn

Controlled burns (also known as prescribed fires) can get out of hand and quickly accelerate. When planning controlled burns, follow these safety guidelines:

- ▶ **DO YOUR RESEARCH** before you begin. There are many safety considerations. Check with local authorities and fully research all aspects of a controlled burn before implementing one.
- ▶ **BE SURE TO ACQUIRE ANY NECESSARY SAFETY PERMITS** and follow local ordinances related to controlled burns.
- ▶ **NOTIFY YOUR LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENT** and neighbors about the controlled burn ahead of time.
- ▶ **CHECK THE FORECAST FOR WEATHER CONDITIONS**, such as wind direction and speed, as well as humidity (generally, relative humidity should be 40% or higher).
- ▶ **DO NOT INITIATE A CONTROLLED BURN DURING A RED FLAG WARNING**, Fire Weather Watch or any other fire ban.

- ▶ **CLEAR ALL VEGETATION AND WEEDS AT LEAST 10 FEET** (15 feet is better if applicable) around the base of any electric utility pole in the affected area, then wet the base of the poles with water before beginning your burn.
- ▶ **AFTER ANY CONTROLLED BURN, BE SURE TO INSPECT THE ELECTRIC UTILITY POLES** for damage. Fire damage is usually evident by blackening or scorch marks; however, even slight discoloration can indicate a serious problem. Sometimes, hot embers can burn the poles from the inside out, and the damage is not immediately apparent.
- ▶ **IF YOUR FIRE GETS OUT OF CONTROL**, gets too close to a power pole or if the pole catches on fire, call 911 and Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative at 316-542-3131



Before burning, check the property for electrical equipment — like this pad-mounted transformer — and power poles to avoid damage and potential outages.

Once a fire breaks out, never spray water near the pole, power lines or any other utility equipment.

To inquire about controlled burns near power lines and poles, contact Line Superintendent Kyle Pipkin at 316-542-3131.

For more information about electrical safety, go to www.SafeElectricity.org.

Do Not Overlook Overhead Power Lines *Continued from page 12A* ▶

HOME MAINTENANCE

Always be aware of the location of power lines, particularly when using long tools, such as ladders, pool skimmers and pruning poles. Lower long tools and equipment before moving or transporting them. Other safety tips include:

- ▶ Carry ladders and other long items horizontally whenever possible.
- ▶ Be careful when working on or around your roof.
- ▶ Never go on a roof in windy or bad weather.

YARDWORK

When trimming trees, do not allow yourself or trimmers to come within 20 feet of overhead power lines, including service lines to your home or outbuilding. Also:

- ▶ Do not trim trees near power lines;

instead, leave this to certified line clearance tree trimmers.

- ▶ Do not use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near electric lines.

FARMING

Review power line locations and other potential electrical hazards with all workers at morning safety meetings. Equipment that could get too close or contact a power pole or line includes sprayer tips, tall equipment, dump trucks, augers and other extensions.

AT WORK

Follow all OSHA distance requirements when operating dump trucks, cranes,

concrete pump truck extensions and when working on a roof or in a bucket.

OTHER REMINDERS

- ▶ Do not come within 50 feet of a downed or damaged power line. Warn others to stay away and Call 911 to report it.
- ▶ Never climb trees near power lines. Even if the power lines are not touching the tree, they could come in contact when weight is added to the branch.

Look up and look out for overhead power lines. Contact can happen in an instant. For additional electrical safety tips, go to www.SafeElectricity.org.

Do not come within 50 feet of a downed or damaged power line. Warn others to stay away and Call 911 to report it.