



Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative

SEDGWICK COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

currentnews

Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative

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FROM THE MANAGER

Playing It Safe Online



Scott Ayres

In today's world, most of us don't leave the front door unlocked. We protect our homes, loved ones and valuables from intruders with locks,

alarms and other security measures. Cybersecurity is no different. It's the practice of protecting other valuables such as your identity, banking and health records and other sensitive information from digital attacks and theft.

In addition to pumpkin-spice lattes, crisper air and Halloween festivities, October is the time of year we recognize Cybersecurity Awareness Month. While taking necessary steps to protect our personal information is a year-round practice, at Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative we use this time to share helpful cybersecurity reminders across our team of employees.

Given our increased reliance on internet-connected devices and gadgets, this month, I'd like to share a few cybersecurity tips and let you know how Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative is working to boost our own cybersecurity efforts.

According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA), an agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security that is responsible for strengthening cybersecurity and infrastructure protection, these are the four best ways to keep you and your family safe online.

1 IMPLEMENT MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION (ALSO

KNOWN AS TWO-STEP VERIFICATION) ON YOUR ACCOUNTS. The additional layer of protection makes it much harder for criminals to access your information.

Even if a hacker obtains your password, they may be unable to access your accounts if multi-step verification is enabled.

2 UPDATE YOUR SOFTWARE.

This is one of the easiest ways to protect your personal data. When downloading a software update, make sure it's coming straight from the company that created it. Beware of fake pop-ups that request urgent downloads. Better yet, turn on automatic updates.

3 THINK BEFORE YOU CLICK. Most successful cyberattacks start with phishing emails. Don't take the bait when cybercriminals go phishing.



**CYBER
SECURITY**
* AWARENESS MONTH *

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Daylight Saving Time Ends Nov. 5

Daylight saving time is a perfect time to check fire, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, and to change batteries. Make sure smoke detectors work properly by using the alarm test option. Use a vacuum to make sure there are no cobwebs, spiders or other little insects taking up residence, which could hinder the effects of the smoke alarm.

Detectors play a larger role in survival than one might think. A recent study showed that inoperable smoke alarms caused two-thirds of fire-related deaths due to damage, defects and

missing batteries. Write the date on the new battery to ensure there will be no questions about when it was last replaced. Daylight



saving time is also a great opportunity to review home safety with family members including escape routes and checking all electrical outlets. Practice a home safety review and test procedures on evacuating safely in an emergency situation. Look through the house for any hazards, such as overloaded or improperly placed extension cords. It is recommended to make sure areas around the furnace, water heater and stove are clear of debris that can cause fire.

Remember to set your clocks back one hour before 2 a.m. on Sunday, Nov. 5.

Playing It Safe Online *Continued from page 12A*

Avoid emails (or texts) that look too good to be true, oddly urgent, poorly crafted or include unusual requests.

4 CREATE STRONG PASSWORDS, USING LONG, UNIQUE AND COMPLEX WORDS OR PHRASES.

Consider using a password manager to save time, work across all devices, protect your identity and notify you of potential phishing websites.

For the Young People in Your Household

Just as you would talk with your children about safety in the physical world, discuss ways to stay safe online. Help them understand the public nature of the internet. Young people need to know early on, that what is shared online stays online and is difficult (if not impossible) to take back. Just as you would guard your money or valuables, children need to learn to guard their personal information, especially on social networks. As a parent or guardian, help your children learn about and use the

privacy and security settings on social networks and gaming sites.

Keeping the Electric Grid and Your Data Secure

We're doing our share on the cyber front. Part of offering excellent service is keeping that service secure and reliable. For Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative, reliability means repairing wear and tear, upgrading our equipment to withstand storms and severe weather and using technology and proven practices to keep our system secure from cybersecurity issues.

We also work together with co-ops across the state in protecting our infrastructure. We learn from each other to keep the grid's network secure.

While we can't stop a storm or predict every disruption, as a co-op we do everything we can to keep the lights on and our members protected. Because if we all do our part, our interconnected world will be safer and more secure for everyone.

How to Report an Outage

Need to Report an Outage?

316-542-3131



Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative works with Cooperative Response Center, Inc. (CRC) for all our after-hours outage reporting. CRC will verify individual outages, left on their automated system, by returning a phone call from one of their toll free numbers. This will permit CRC to prioritize outages to ensure power is restored in a safe and timely manner. CRC will also verify main fuse/breakers have been checked, ask member if meter has a display, and relay fees if outage is on the member's side.

If you see down power poles or electric lines, please call 316-542-3131 or 911 to report them.

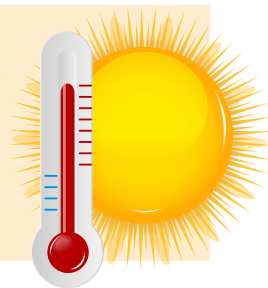
PLEASE NOTE, we do not monitor Facebook or X (formerly Twitter) for outage information, please call 316-542-3131 to report your outage.

Thank You for Participating in Peak Control

Sedgwick County Electric Co-op would like to thank those members who participated in peak alerts.

Members who reduced their electric usage from 3-6 p.m. on days when temperatures were 95 degrees or higher during June, July, August and September helped keep the peak demand cost down.

Working together and using energy wisely help keep our costs down and electric rates stable.



SPOOKY Energy Savings

This spooky season, we're sharing a few energy-saving tricks so you can treat yourself to lower energy bills. Here are four simple ways to summon the spirit of energy efficiency.

Conjure instant savings with a smart thermostat. One of the easiest ways to save energy is through thermostat control, since home heating and cooling account for a large portion of monthly energy use. **SMART THERMOSTATS** can help you manage heating and cooling costs by learning your daily routine and adjusting the temperature settings accordingly. You can control a smart thermostat from anywhere (through your smart phone), which allows you to prevent unnecessary energy consumption while you're away. Sorcery!

Get rid of goosebumps by eliminating ghostly drafts. The winter chill is just around the corner, so now is the time to **SEAL AIR LEAKS** around your home. Apply caulk and weatherstripping around drafty windows and doors to



Smart thermostats can help you manage heating and cooling costs by learning your daily routine and adjusting the temperature settings accordingly.

make your home more comfortable and lower your energy use.

Illuminate your lair with energy efficient lighting. **LED BULBS** use 75% less energy and last 25 times longer than incandescent lightbulbs. Make the switch to reduce energy used for lighting. Remember to use LEDs when it's time to decorate for the upcoming holiday season. LED light strings offer an average of 88% energy savings compared to traditional incandescent light strings.

Stir up savings with countertop cauldrons. Cooler weather summons our favorite soup recipes. Small countertop appliances like **SLOW COOKERS** use less energy than cooking meals on the stovetop. Grab your book of spells (or recipes) and start stirring up savings in the kitchen.

When we look around our homes, there are many opportunities to save energy. So this spooky season, investigate your space and unlock a different kind of magic — the kind that brings real energy savings.

Small countertop appliances like slow cookers use less energy than cooking meals on the stovetop.



Sedgwick County Electric Named 5-Star Co-op

Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative is proud to be recognized as a 5-Star Co-op for our efforts through the Co-ops Vote initiative.



Five-star status marks the highest level of engagement in Co-ops Vote. The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) has recognized Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative and member cooperatives nationwide for their efforts in promoting civic engagement among members.

Sedgwick County Electric Continues Outstanding Safety Record

Every employee has the right to go home safe and healthy at the end of every day. Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative is committed to the safety of their employees. Safety is practiced in our day-to-day activities from tailgate discussions and reviewing work procedures to monthly safety meetings.

Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative earned a No Lost Time Accident Award and was recognized at the Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. Summer Meeting in July for working 136,692 employee hours with no lost time off.

SMART Breaker Boxes

Every home has an electrical panel, otherwise known as a breaker box. The design hasn't changed much over the years, but through recent innovation, the smart technology-enabled electrical panel is changing that.

Smart breaker boxes, which can operate on their own or in conjunction with a standard electrical panel, make them an excellent alternative for households looking to save energy.

Consumers are upgrading to smart breaker boxes to make their home electrical systems safer and more reliable. It's recommended to hire a qualified electrician to install the smart panel, which can be done using a home's existing electrical wiring and infrastructure.

Smart breaker boxes are designed to easily connect to other smart devices in your home. With the capacity to remotely monitor and adjust energy

consumption, these devices provide several advantages that make them a worthwhile investment for anyone looking to consume less energy.

One advantage smart breaker boxes provide is convenience for homeowners to monitor and control how much energy they use. With smart circuit breakers, you can receive real-time data that allows you to pinpoint appliances or devices that consume excessive energy. This real-time tracking allows consumers to adjust their energy use where needed, which ultimately saves money on monthly energy bills, reduces energy waste and is good for the electric grid.

Smart breaker boxes are all about managing your electrical load. While the technology to track how much energy a home uses has been available for years, the ability to control how that energy is used is new. A smart breaker box can reveal how much power each circuit is using and turn each one on or off. Some smart breaker boxes allow you to establish schedules based on importance, such as refrigeration and heat to be on 24/7, but less important loads like Wi-Fi or the television to turn off during scheduled times, when no one is home.

Smart breaker boxes offer additional benefits for those with home solar systems. Smart breaker boxes help solar energy systems run more efficiently by determining how much energy is being used and how it can be stored. Through intelligent load management, they can provide longer battery backup life for those with energy storage. Additionally, integration with other smart home devices, like thermostats and virtual assistants, further enhances the connected-home ecosystem.

Safety in electrical devices is highly important to consumers, and smart breaker boxes provide enhanced safety features that consumers appreciate. Smart breaker boxes can identify abnormalities and other potential



Smart breaker boxes, like the hardware-agnostic Lumin Smart Panel shown here, turn standard panels into smart panels by providing comprehensive energy control and extending whole-home backup.

electrical problems, then quickly shut off power supply if a circuit shorts or becomes overloaded, avoiding electrical fires and other dangers. Many smart breaker boxes include surge protection to help protect against power spikes and other issues.

Smart breaker boxes aren't just for consumers — electric utilities are using them too.

For electric cooperatives, smart breaker boxes also offer a range of benefits. A primary advantage of these devices is that they allow for more efficient and reliable energy distribution. With the ability to remotely monitor energy use and detect faults within the system, electric cooperatives can quickly respond to issues and minimize outage times for consumers — ultimately managing the grid more efficiently.

There's no denying that smart home technologies have changed how we use our homes, and smart breaker boxes are no exception. Smart breaker boxes help both customers and electric utilities in multiple ways. With advanced safety features, real-time energy tracking and control, and the ability to use energy more efficiently, these devices are a smart investment for anyone who wants to make their home's system more reliable, safer and cost-effective.



With smart breaker boxes, like the SPAN Panel shown here, you can control and monitor every circuit in your home from a smartphone or tablet.