



West Kentucky
Rural Electric
Your Touchstone Energy[®]
Cooperative 

Tips from your co-op for weathering summer power outages

West Kentucky Rural Electric Cooperative reminds members that power outages can and do occur during the summer. When a power outage occurs during hot weather, take steps to maintain safety and comfort until power is restored.

High winds that topple utility poles and power lines cause many summer outages. It's important to stay clear of downed power lines at all times, even during cleanup efforts. Be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard.

Assume that any dangling wires you encounter are electrical and treat all downed or hanging lines as if they are energized and dangerous. If you are driving and come upon a downed power line, stay in your vehicle, warn others to stay away and contact emergency personnel or your electric utility. Also when driving, be careful at intersections where traffic lights may be out.

If power to your home is out for a prolonged period, know and understand important safety precautions and steps to cope with heat until power is restored:

- Remember to call your electric utility immediately to report the outage.
- Dress in loose, lightweight clothing and stay on the coolest, lowest level of your home.
- Use natural ventilation to cool homes, and consider purchasing battery-powered fans.
- Drink plenty of water and avoid heavy meals, caffeinated drinks and alcohol.
- Keep refrigerator or freezer doors closed. A freezer that is half full or full can keep foods frozen 24 to 48 hours. Foods can stay safe in an unopened refrigerator up to four hours. If an outage lasts longer than four hours, remove and pack meat, milk and other dairy products in a cooler with ice.
- Use safe alternative food preparations. A barbecue grill is an excellent way to prepare food. Always grill outside.
- Check on friends and relatives—especially children, seniors, and those with medical conditions or disabilities. These people may need to seek emergency cooling shelters.
- Keep a first-aid kit in your home and one in your car. Make sure that it includes scissors, tweezers, safety pins, aspirin, eyewash and rubbing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide.
- Close all drapes and blinds on the sunny side of your residence.
- Take your family and pets to a basement or other cool location if you have one. Also consider going to an air-conditioned public place during warmer daytime hours.

During an outage, WKRECC recommends turning off electrical appliances and unplugging major equipment, including air conditioning units, computers and televisions. Power sometimes comes back in surges, which can damage electronics. Your circuits could overload when power returns if all your electronics are still on and plugged in. Leave one light on to indicate that power has been restored. Wait a few minutes then turn on other appliances and equipment one at a time.

If you use a standby generator, make sure a transfer safety switch is used or connect the appliance(s) directly to the generator output through an isolated circuit before you operate it. This prevents electricity from traveling back through the power lines, what's known as "back feed." Back feed creates danger for anyone near lines, particularly crews working to restore power.