

# POWER LINE

September 2020



## Redwood Electric Cooperative

60 Pine Street • Clements, Minnesota 56224

## Cold Weather Rule

The state's Cold Weather Rule guides cooperatives and the members on winter disconnections

### Residential Customer Notice

An electric cooperative must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a home between October 15 and April 15 if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit **AND**

#### **ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS ARE MET BY THE MEMBER:**

1. The household income of the customer is at or below 50 percent of the state median household income. The electric cooperative may verify income on forms it provides or obtain verification of income from the local energy assistance provider. A customer meets the income requirements of this clause if the customer receives any public assistance, including energy assistance that uses an income eligibility threshold set at or below 50 percent of the state median household income;
2. A customer enters into and makes reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household; and
3. A customer receives referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation or other programs likely to reduce the customer's energy bills. In addition, an electric cooperative must, between August 15 and October 15 of each year, notify all residential customers of these provisions.

**Before disconnecting service to a residential customer between October 15 and April 15, an electric cooperative must provide:** *These are provided to each member in a special insert with your monthly bill and available on our website.*

1. A notice of the proposed disconnection; *\*This is the **RED** disconnect notice on your monthly bill.*
2. A list of energy assistance providers;
3. Forms on which to declare an inability to pay; and
4. A statement explaining available time-payment plans and other options to secure continued utility service.

### Restrictions for Disconnection

1. If a customer must be involuntarily disconnected between October 15 and April 15 for failure to comply with the residential disconnection provisions, it must not occur on a Friday, unless the customer declines to enter into a payment agreement offered that day in person or via personal contact by telephone by the cooperative;
2. The disconnection must not occur on a weekend, holiday or the day before a holiday, when utility offices are closed, or after the close of business on a day when disconnection is permitted, unless a representative from the electric cooperative who is authorized to enter into a payment agreement, accept and continue service offers a payment agreement to the customer; and
3. If a customer does not respond to a disconnection notice, the customer must not be disconnected until the utility investigates whether the home is occupied. If the unit is occupied, the utility must immediately inform the occupant of the provisions of this section. If the unit is unoccupied, the utility must give seven days written notice of the proposed disconnection to the local energy assistance provider before disconnecting. If prior to disconnection, a customer appeals a notice of involuntary disconnection, as provided by the utility's established appeal procedure, the utility must not disconnect until the appeal is resolved.

**If you need help with your electric bill during the winter months, contact energy assistance and apply for funds. It is very important that this is done before October. IF you receive a Disconnect Notice on your monthly bill, it is YOUR responsibility to either pay the balance by the due date or contact our office immediately to make other arrangements. All arrangements must be kept to avoid disconnection of services and to make any future arrangements.**

#### **EMERGENCY ENERGY ASSISTANCE PHONE NUMBERS**

United Community Action: 800-658-2448 or 507-537-1416 (Energy Assistance)

Salvation Army: 507-326-5017 or 507-637-2187

Heat Share (Thru Salvation Army): 507-842-7279

Southwest Health and Human Services: 507-637-4050

## A Safety Note from Your Cooperative

# Don't be THAT guy!



You know that guy that just caused the power outage and your neighbor doesn't have power now. In all seriousness, making contact with a power line that is overhead or underground is serious and can be deadly. Several of these incidents occurred last year to farmers in our own state with tragic results. At our cooperative, we have had many incidents involving farm equipment and we don't want to see anyone get hurt. Even one incident is one too many.

### So, how can you become THAT guy?

#### Making contact with Overhead Power lines

- You decide to place the hay bales right under a line.
- You are moving your irrigation system and you put it right into the line.
- You turn in the field and hit the pole breaking it at the base.
- Oops, you just snagged the guy wire and down came the pole and lines.
- You planted trees right under the lines, the kind that are fast growing.



#### Making contact with Underground Power lines

- You back the truck into the underground cabinet, opening it up and exposing the energized equipment.
- You piled material near the underground cabinet and now the crews cannot open it up to maintain it properly.
- You started to dig and, oops, you hit a line; you forgot to call 811 for a locate.

### Do these actions to NOT be THAT guy?

- Power lines can sag; just because your equipment cleared it last year, it might not this year. Make sure to always keep 10 feet distance from any overhead power line. How can you tell? Use a spotter to watch the equipment being moved.
- Make this a daily habit-look overhead before beginning the day and notice where the power lines are located. Look for the underground cabinets, too. Point out these items to anyone else you are working with.
- Be extra cautious when moving equipment in windy conditions. Always better to lower the equipment before moving it.
- Always lower a grain auger when moving it from bin to bin.



***If you are struggling to pay your monthly housing bills, go to the website below and apply for assistance through the MN COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program. (CHAP)***



***Helping People. Changing Lives.***

## **Struggling to pay your monthly housing bills?**

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**Call a United Community Action Partnership (UCAP) office near you:**  
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**Willmar: 320.235.0850**

**Marshall: 507.537.1416**

**Redwood Falls: 507.637.2187**

United Community Action Partnership (UCAP) has been awarded money to help families who are struggling to meet their housing related payments through the MN COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program (CHAP). An on-line application is available at [www.housinghelpmn.org](http://www.housinghelpmn.org). If families in UCAP's service area use the on-line application, please scroll to Southwest Minnesota and click on the United Community Action Partnership line. If needed, UCAP staff can help families walk through the process.

In addition to contacting a UCAP office and applying for the MN COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program (CHAP), you **MUST** contact ***Redwood Electric at 507-692-2214 or email [sgroebner@redwoodelectric.com](mailto:sgroebner@redwoodelectric.com)***

## A Safety Note...

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- Build grain bins away from power lines to reduce the risk of grain augers coming into contact with the lines. This action also eliminates the chance of a storm blowing a power line onto a metal building which then becomes electrified.
- If you are planning to move a building or bring a new one onto your site, call the co-op to make sure the lines can be safely moved and cleared.
- Report any lines that appear low or sagging.
- Always call 811 before doing any digging.
- Never assume a line or underground cabinet is safe to touch; we cannot tell if it is energized simply by looking at it. Again, call the co-op promptly.
- If your equipment gets in a power line, do not leave the equipment. Remain in the cab, as long as it is not on fire, and call the co-op right away. If you must leave, know how to leave the cab properly.
- Don't let anyone approach the cab of any equipment that has come in contact with a power line; keep them a safe distance away which is usually at least 40 feet.
- Always have an emergency plan in place. Teach all family members what to do in case of an emergency. Don't touch or move anyone who is in contact with electricity. You could be shocked. When calling 911 or your local emergency number, be sure to report an electric-contact accident.



Operator of field cultivator knocked it off the base



Operator of equipment hit pole, snapping it in half but lines remained in the air

## Office Hours & Contact Information

Monday-Friday 7:00 AM-3:30 PM

Phone: (888) 251-5100

Email address: [office@redwoodelectric.com](mailto:office@redwoodelectric.com)

Web: [www.redwoodelectric.com](http://www.redwoodelectric.com)

Pay By Phone: 844-846-2696

**SmartHub Link:** <https://redwoodelectric.smarthub.coop>

### OUTAGES

(507) 692-2214 or (888) 251-5100  
24 HOURS A DAY

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**\*CALL BEFORE YOU DIG\***

**Gopher State One**

Call (800) 252-1166

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### STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

*Redwood Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.* If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to:

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).