



Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative

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**SEDGWICK COUNTY
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

currentnews

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FROM THE MANAGER

Know the Signs of a Scam



Scott Ayres

It's no secret that consumers with a water, gas or electricity connection have long been targets for utility scams, but fraudsters have changed their tactics since

the COVID-19 pandemic. As consumers became more reliant on technology for work, school and commerce, scammers noted these shifts and adapted their tactics to this changed environment.

Imposter scams are the No. 1 type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission. While scam artists may come to your door posing as a utility worker who works for the "power company," in today's more connected world, attempts are more likely to come through an electronic device, via email, phone, or text.

Common Types of Scams

A scammer may claim you are overdue on your electric bill and threaten to disconnect your service if you don't pay immediately. Whether this is done in-person, by phone, text or email, the scammers want to scare you into immediate payment, so you don't have time to think clearly.

If this happens over the phone, simply hang up. If you're concerned about your bill, call us at 316-542-3131. Our phone number can also be found on your monthly bill and on our website, www.sedgwickcountyelectric.coop. If the scam is by email or text, delete it before taking any action. If you're unsure, you can always contact us at 316-542-3131, or go to sedgwickcountyelectric.smarthub.coop to check the status of your account. Remember, Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative will never attempt to

Continued on page 12D ►



Lightning Facts

- 1** Flashes of lightning between a thunderstorm and the earth are called cloud to ground.
- 2** There is roughly 5 to 10 times more intra-cloud lightning than cloud-to-ground lightning.
- 3** The vertical extent of cloud-to-ground lightning averages 3 to 4 miles.
- 4** Lightning often strikes up to 10 miles away from rainfall.
- 5** Lightning can occur in winter during heavy snowfalls.
- 6** Lightning can strike in the same place twice.
- 7** Lightning has 100 million to 1 billion volts and contains billions of watts.

SOURCES: NATIONAL LIGHTNING SAFETY INSTITUTE,
NOAA NATIONAL SEVERE STORMS LABORATORY

Listen for Peak Alerts and Save

This month, we are asking members to participate in Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative's Peak Control program. This voluntary program helps you save on your summer energy bills and can also help the co-op hold down wholesale power costs during the eight months of our off-peak period.

A major portion of our annual wholesale power bill is based on power consumed during the 3-6 p.m. demand timeframe of the summer months. The price of electricity is at a premium during that three-hour window due to the "high demand" for energy production during those hot, summer hours.

What is Peak Control?

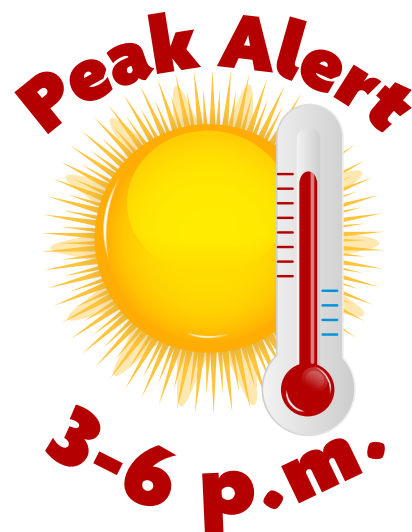
Peak control is a voluntary program in which our members can participate to hold down electricity costs.

How Can I Participate in Peak Control?

You can participate by monitoring your use of electric appliances and equipment that require larger amounts of electricity during peak hours. Any steps you can take to lower your energy use from 3-6 p.m., Monday through Friday will help control costs.

When Should I Participate in Peak Control?

Participate when "Peak Alerts" are is-



sued, typically during the hours of 3-6 p.m. weekdays from June 1 through Sept. 30. Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter to receive peak alerts.

The actual peak demand for June, July, August and September is the billing demand for each respective month. Special emphasis is placed during July and August, as the peak electricity demand registered by the co-op during those two months drives the demand billing for the following "off peak" eight months. Be aware of days when temperatures are forecast to be above 95 degrees. These are the type of days when peak demand can occur.

What are the Benefits of Peak Control?

Reducing electric usage between 3-6 p.m. will help reduce our peak load. Each kilowatt shaved or shifted during peak load is a cost savings for cooperative members.

Sedgwick County Electric Welcomes New Employee



Josh Wood

JOSH WOOD joined the staff of Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative on Feb. 2, 2022, as an equipment operator/groundman position. Wood and his wife, Brittany, have a 6-month-old son, Hayes Derek Wood. In his spare time he enjoys farming and spending time with family and friends.

Welcome Josh to the cooperative family.

To Install (Insulation) or Not to Install

Making sure your home is properly insulated can go a long way toward making your home more energy efficient and comfortable.

Before you attempt to replace insulation, however, there are some tasks of the job to consider, including its location and your comfort level with starting and completing the job correctly. If you will be installing batt insulation, check to see if it is labeled with an R-value or find an online value chart by zone.

Consider the following guidelines from the Insulation Institute before purchasing insulation.

Should I do the job myself?

Whether you take it on is determined by several factors, including:

- ▶ Is the space you want to insulate is open and accessible?
The easiest and most common places to undertake DIY installation projects are attics and basements.
- ▶ The type of material you want to use. Batts or rolls are often installed by homeowners, while other types of insulation can require professional installers.
- ▶ Your skills and comfort level.
- ▶ Any safety issues that might make the job more suitable for a professional.
- ▶ How much time will be needed to address air leaks?

Can I complete it safely?

Even if you are considering installing insulation in an open area that is easy to access, the space should be inspected. A professional should be called in to correct problems and complete the job if you find these conditions or issues:

- ▶ Wet or damp insulation.
- ▶ Moldy or rotted attic rafters or floor joists.
- ▶ Vents that exhaust moist air directly into the attic space instead of outdoors.
- ▶ A history of ice dams in the winter.
- ▶ Little or no attic ventilation.
- ▶ Knob-and-tube wiring (homes pre-1930).
- ▶ Unsealed and uninsulated recessed (“can”) lights. Special care must be taken when insulating around these.
- ▶ Possible presence of asbestos.

What is the age of my home?

If your home was built around 1975 or earlier, the insulation may be vermiculite, which can contain asbestos. It is a lightweight, pea-sized, flaky gray material. If you suspect you have this type of insulation, do not disturb it, and hire a professional to test it. Your local health department might be able to help locate a reputable testing company. If asbestos is found, the insulation will need to be removed by a professional.

Beat the Peak This Summer

As temperatures begin to spike, there are steps you can take to save money on energy bills this summer.

According to the Department of Energy, a typical home uses a whopping 48% of energy expenditures just on the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system (HVAC) system. Although a majority of that figure is spent on heating, Americans still spend \$29 billion every year to power their air conditioners.

Aside from replacing your central air conditioner with a newer, high-efficiency model, there are some things you can do to increase efficiency and reduce your energy bills.

Besides weather stripping and caulking around windows and doors in your home (always a good idea regardless of the time of year), consider the following:

Close curtains, blinds, and shades during the hottest part of the day. Not only is about one-third of a home's energy lost around windows, but about 76% of sunlight that falls on stan-

dard double-pane windows enters the home to become heat, according to energy.gov.

- ▶ If you don't already have one, install a programmable or smart thermostat. You can save up to 10% a year on heating and cooling by adjusting your thermostat 7 to 10 degrees from its normal setting for 8 hours a day, according to energy.gov.
- ▶ Clean the filter and get your unit inspected by a HVAC professional.
- ▶ Consider changes to your landscaping. Greenery that includes shade trees and plants that insulate the foundation can reduce energy costs.
- ▶ Ventilate the attic and check insulation. Adequately sized vents and an attic fan can help prevent hot air from building up. If your attic has less than 6 to 8 inches of insulation, consider adding more. By addressing air leaks around your home and adding insulation, homeowners can save around

10% annually on energy bills, according to energystar.gov.

- ▶ Get a pre-season checkup by a professional HVAC technician, which could help your air conditioner run more efficiently.
- ▶ Make sure your outdoor condenser unit is clean and free from debris. Ideally, the unit should be in the shade.
- ▶ Use your clothes dryer and oven during the cooler parts of the day.
- ▶ Consider a professional energy audit to reveal where your home is inefficient, including air leaks and exposed duct work. Increased summer electric demand not only affects the monthly budget, but it can also seriously strain your home's electrical system, which can create dangerous shock and fire hazards. Flickering or dimming lights or frequent circuit breaker trips are signs of an overloaded electrical system or faulty wiring that should be checked immediately by a qualified electrician.

Know the Signs of a Scam *Continued from page 12A ▶*

demand immediate payment after just one notice.

Some scammers may falsely claim you have been overcharged on your bill and say they want to give a refund. It sounds easy. All you have to do is click or press a button to initiate the process. If you proceed, you will be prompted to provide banking or other personal information. Instead of money going into your bank account, the scammers can drain your account and use personal information such as a social security number for identity theft.

If this “refund” scam happens over the phone, just hang up and block the phone number to prevent future robocalls. If this scam attempt occurs via email (known as a “phishing” attempt) or by text (“smishing”), do not click any links. Instead, delete it, and if possible, block the sender. If

you do overpay on your energy bill, Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative will automatically apply the credit to your next billing cycle. When in doubt, contact us.

Defend Yourself Against Scams

Be wary of calls or texts from unknown numbers. Be suspicious of an unknown person claiming to be a utility worker who requests banking or other personal information.

Never let anyone into your home that you don't know unless you have a scheduled appointment with Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative.

We want to help protect our community against utility scams, and you can help create the first line of defense. Please report any potential scams to us so we can spread the word to prevent others in the community from falling victim.

Co-op Sponsors Pedal Tractor Pull

Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative will host the Pedal Tractor Pull at the Sedgwick County Fair on Saturday, July 23.

Registration begins at 9 a.m. at the Sedgwick County Fairgrounds, just east of the open-air arena, and the pull begins at 10 a.m.

Children from ages 4 to 12 are eligible to participate. There is no entry fee. Participants are required to wear shoes and must have a parent or legal guardian present to register. Top finishers will advance to the tractor pull event at the State Fair in Hutchinson.



Enjoy Picnic Food, but Not for Too Long

Get outside and dine al fresco! Summer is a great time for picnics, however, food left out too long can mean foodborne illnesses. Keeping cold food cold and hot food hot, indoors and out, is critical for preventing bacterial growth in food, according to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Do not let your picnic food remain in the “danger zone” — between 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit (F) — for more than 2 hours, or 1 hour if outdoor temperatures are 90 degrees or above. This is when bacteria in food can multiply rapidly and lead to foodborne illness, according to the FDA.

The FDA's tips include the following for cold food:

Cold perishable food should be kept

in the cooler at 40 F or below until serving time.

- ▶ Once you have served it, it should not sit out for longer than 2 hours or 1 hour if the outdoor temperature is above 90 F. If it does sit out that long, discard it.
- ▶ Foods such as potato salad and desserts in individual serving dishes can be placed directly on ice or in a shallow container set in a deep pan filled with ice. Drain off water as ice melts and replace ice frequently.

The following should be observed for hot food:

Hot food should be kept hot at 140 F or above.

- ▶ Wrap it well and place it in an insulated container until serving.
- ▶ Just as with cold food, hot food

should not sit out for more than 2 hours or 1 hour at temperatures above 90 F. If food is left out longer, throw it away.

The FDA also offers four simple tips for safe food handling:

- ▶ **CLEAN:** Wash hands and surfaces often.
- ▶ **SEPARATE:** Keep raw meat away from other food.
- ▶ **COOK:** Cook food to the right temperature; color and texture are unreliable indicators.
- ▶ **CHILL:** Refrigerate food promptly.

As you plan or attend picnics this summer, take steps to avoid foodborne illness. When eating outdoors, safe food handling is critical since bacteria can multiply rapidly as food heats up in summer temperatures.