

Y-W ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

AUGUST 2024

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Akron, CO 80720**ph** 970-345-2291
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web ywelectric.coop**Y-W Electric Association, Inc.**

is dedicated to providing high-quality, reliable electric service and related products to our members at competitive prices. Our members deserve and shall receive quality service unexcelled in our industry. We are committed to maintaining an environment where the Board of Directors and employees can perform at maximum potential to benefit our Y-W community.

OFFICE HOURS

7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Monday – Thursday

Save a Life: Avoid Distractions While Driving

BY TRENT LOUTENSOCK GENERAL MANAGER



TRENT LOUTENSOCK

Some temptations are hard to resist. For me, it can be especially challenging to turn down that last piece of pecan pie.

While driving, we typically hear that “ding” on our phone, alerting us to a text or call coming through, and we sometimes feel the urgent need to check it. We know we shouldn’t, but we reason that we’re going to make an exception — just this once.

So, why do we indulge in behavior we know to be wrong, dangerous and, in many states, illegal? Call it hubris. According to AAA research, most people feel they are better-than-average drivers. After all, we have busy lives and are accustomed to multitasking. However, mounds of research and thousands of deaths every year prove otherwise.

August is Back to School Safety Month. As a new school year begins with young drivers and school buses back on the road, this is a good time to remind folks, including myself, of the dangers of distracted driving.

The reality is that using a phone while driving creates enormous potential for injuries and fatalities. Distractions take a motorist’s attention off driving, which can make a driver miss critical events, objects and cues, potentially leading to a crash.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, one out of every 10 fatal crashes in the U.S. involves distracted driving, resulting in more than 3,000 deaths annually. I find this statistic heartbreaking considering that so many of these accidents could easily be avoided if we’d simply put down our phones while driving.

Distracted driving is defined as any activity that diverts our attention, including texting or talking on the phone, and adjusting the navigation or entertainment system. Texting is by far one of the most dangerous distractions. Sending or reading one text takes your eyes off the road for an average of 5 seconds. At 55 mph, that’s like driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed.

In addition to refraining from texting while driving, we can help keep the roads safe by moving over for first responders and other emergency vehicles. Additionally, if you see utility crews conducting work near the roadside, I encourage you to move over when possible and give them extra space to perform their work safely.

At Y-W Electric Association, Inc., safety is foremost in everything we do — for both our employees and the members of the communities we serve. We routinely remind our crews of the dangers of distracted driving, and we hope you’ll have similar conversations with your teens who may be new to the roadways and are especially susceptible to the lure of technology. (*Larry & Patricia Champ 4917xxxxx*)

Let’s work together to keep everyone safe on the roads. Remember: That text can wait and waiting just might save a life.

Sending A Child To College?

DISCUSS SAFETY FIRST

When you are shopping for dorm room supplies, décor, snacks, and other back-to-campus items, take a moment to discuss safety tips with your child before hugs and goodbyes. Here are some safety topics to help keep your college student safe.

Electrical safety tips:

- When shopping for items that run on electricity, look for a safety endorsement label, such as UL (Underwriters Laboratories).
- Do not put a cell phone under a pillow or place it on or under bedding. It could overheat or catch fire.
- In the dorm or apartment, make sure outlets near water sources are equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). If they are not, contact the resident assistant, campus housing staff or landlord. *(David Hansen 7404xxxxx)*
- Use power strips with an over-current protector that will shut off power if too much current is drawn.
- Avoid overloading extension cords, power strips, or outlets.
- Do not hang decorative lights with nails or tacks; always use plastic hooks.
- Do not run electrical cords across traffic paths or under rugs.

General safety tips:

- Find out what type of public safety department is on campus and how it functions; ask which services the department offers and the steps it takes to prevent crime.
- Locate emergency call buttons or phones across campus in case of an emergency. *(Luis F. True 9334xxxxx)*
- Walk with a friend, especially at night.

7 CAMPUS SAFETY TIPS

Every College Student Should Know

Relay these safety tips to your young adults who are about to hit campus for the first time or return for another year.

1. Do not overload electrical outlets, power strips or extension cords. Use power strips with an overcurrent protector.
2. Be aware of your surroundings, especially when listening to music or texting.
3. Unplug small appliances when not in use and all appliances when away for extended periods.
4. This tip still holds true: never walk alone at night.
5. Avoid using generic cubes or cords. They could overheat, shock or burn you.
6. Locate the emergency call buttons or phones across campus in case of an emergency.
7. Do not put your cell phone on or under your pillow or bedding. It could overheat or catch fire.

SafeElectricity.org

- When attending events or parties, go with at least one person you know and trust. If your friend leaves, do not stay.
- Always be aware of your surroundings.
- Avoid being distracted (listening to music, texting, etc.) while walking on campus.
- Find out what types of mental health services or counseling the campus offers.

To learn more about electrical safety tips, go to [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org).

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Placing heat sources, such as lamps, computers or TVs, near your thermostat can result in false temperature readings, increased energy use and inconsistent cooling/heating. Make sure your thermostat is installed in an area clear of obstructions, electronic devices, direct sunlight and drafts.

Ensuring your thermostat is free from these types of interferences optimizes energy efficiency, improves indoor comfort and reduces wear and tear on your cooling/heating system.

Source: [energy.gov](https://www.energy.gov)



Win a Bill Credit

Each month, Y-W Electric Association offers its members a chance to earn a \$20 credit on their next electric bill. If you find your name and account number in this magazine, call 800-660-2291 and ask for your credit. It couldn't be easier.

Get acquainted with your account number, read your Colorado Country Life magazine, and pick up the phone. You must claim your credit during the month in which your name appears in the magazine. (Check the date on the front cover.)

There were no names published in the June Annual Report edition of the magazine. Check next month for July's winners.

NATIONAL SAFE DIGGING DAY: CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

Instead of hitting pay dirt, you will pay if you hit an underground line

August 11 (8/11) is National Safe Digging Day, also known as 811 Day. The observance reminds anyone considering an outdoor project that breaks ground to get underground utilities marked in advance. Having them marked is free and easy to do; simply call 811 at least two full business days prior to starting a digging project. While state laws vary, utility companies generally have a few days to respond to your request.

If you don't take the time to call before you dig, you could become the person who digs in an unmarked yard and strikes an underground line every nine minutes. No one wants to be that person.

There are five steps to safer digging:

1. Pre-mark the proposed dig area with white paint or flags.
2. Call 811 or go online to submit your locate request before you dig. There is no charge for the service.
3. Wait the required amount of time (typically two business days).
4. Respect the marks and do not move any flags.
5. Dig with care. Avoid digging on top of or within 18–24 inches on all sides of utility marks, which may mean moving your digging project to another part of your yard.



For more information about electrical safety, visit safeelectricity.org.
For more information about 811, visit www.call811.com.

BILLING CORNER ON TIME BILL PAYING

Each year, Y-W Electric Association must write off the balances left unpaid by consumers disconnecting their services. While this amount is not an exceptionally large amount, the cost to the cooperative is a burden carried by all consumer-members. In the past, this cost has been lowered by doing three things. The first, to do a better job collecting amounts due. Second, to administer a more consistent deposit procedure. Third, to educate our members so that they realized that paying the electric bill is as important as paying the mortgage. (Sherry Hinkle 11401xxxxx)

Many times, paying your bills is a simple matter of priorities. Obviously, shelter is the number one priority for most people. Next would be heat, lights, food, and basic clothing. We at Y-W Electric think your electric bill payment should be taken as seriously as your mortgage or rent payment. Paying on time helps our cash flow, and helps the cooperative run as efficiently as possible, plus it helps to keep rates as low as possible. When you pay late or don't pay at all, you affect the rest of the Y-W members.

We have an average of 750 consumers each month who receive delinquent notices. More than 1,200 notices are printed. The cost

of these notices and the postage required is a cost to the cooperative that is paid by all consumers. More than 100 consumers each month require a second contact. This is by telephone, direct lineman contact, or a door tag. Our collection employees treat everyone with respect while they impress upon the consumer-member that payment is needed to prevent disconnection.

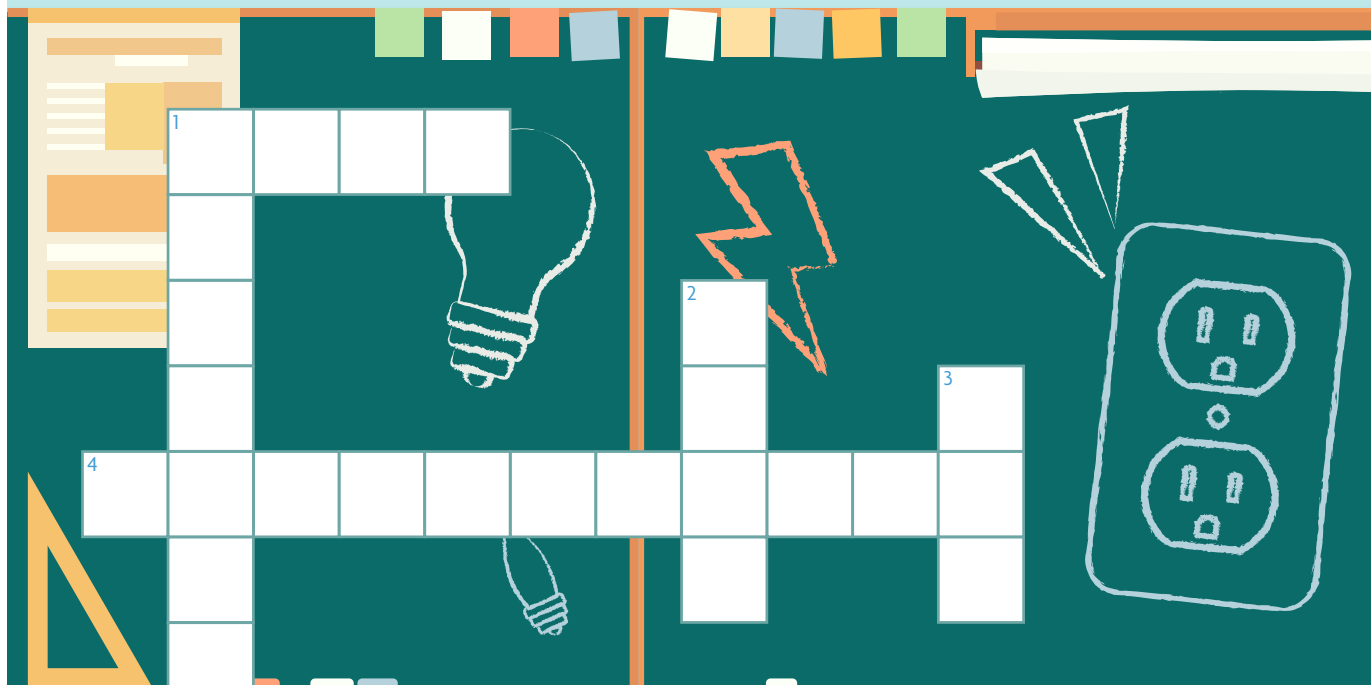
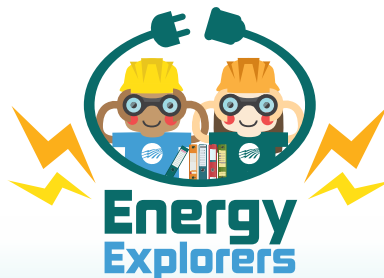
Y-W Electric has more than 3,700 members, with more than 8,500 meter locations. At least 80% pay on time. We truly appreciate those members who treat their electric bill with the seriousness it deserves. We hope that the members who wait for that extra nudge to pay their bill will come to understand that a late bill payment is a cost that affects the amount everyone has to pay for electric service. By paying on time, every member avoids the possibility of a contact charge, or even an after-hours charge for reconnection.

If you need help with your bills, please call the billing department. Payment options are available, including budget plans and automatic bank payment plans. Help us keep our costs at a minimum so everyone will continue to benefit being a member of Y-W Electric.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL SAFETY CROSSWORD PUZZLE

As you gear up for a new school year, remember to practice electrical safety in the classroom *and* at home. From powering electronic devices to spending time outdoors with friends, always play it safe around electricity. *Lisa Jansen 20050xxxxx*

Read the clues below to complete the crossword puzzle, then double check your answers in the key.



ACROSS:

- Never insert anything other than this into an electrical outlet.
- When outdoors, stay away from these big green boxes that lower electricity voltage.

DOWN

- Never play around these when you're outside; you can get hurt!
- Don't yank on a _____ when unplugging it. Instead, grab the base and pull from there.
- Always make sure your hands are _____ before plugging anything in.

ANSWER KEY

1. ACROSS: PLUG
 2. DOWN: CORD
 3. DOWN: DRY
 4. ACROSS: TRANSFORMER
 1. DOWN: POWER LINES
 2. DOWN: CORD
 3. DOWN: DRY