

POWER LINE

May 2021



Redwood Electric Cooperative

60 Pine Street • Clements, Minnesota 56224

ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM-UCAP

Doubles crisis benefits to \$1,200 per household for Minnesotans struggling with heating costs following February cold snap.

We know that COVID-19 has created additional financial hardships, placing an even larger burden on families already struggling to pay their bills or bring their accounts current. If you are experiencing difficulty paying your electric bill, the Energy Assistance Program (EAP) helps pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs for income-qualified homeowners and renters.

EAP primary heat grants range from \$200 to \$1,600 depending on family size, income and energy costs. In addition to primary heat grants, crisis-benefit grants are also available. For the second year in a row, the Minnesota Department of Commerce has increased the maximum annual crisis-benefit grants for qualifying households from \$600 to \$1,200.

Household Size	3 Month Max. Guidelines
1	\$7,066
2	\$9,240
3	\$11,415
4	\$13,589
5	\$15,763
6	\$17,937

Despite the large infusion of dollars into the EAP program, applications for primary heat benefits are down by about 10%, and applications for crisis benefits are down by about 30%. The EAP application deadline is May 31, 2021, but may possibly be extended until July 1, 2021

To learn more about the EAP program or to apply for assistance:

- Visit the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Assistance website, <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance/>, for more details and to access the application portal.
- Contact your county [EAP service provider](#) for additional information and assistance.

Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule also helps to protect and reconnect residential heat from Oct. 15 through April 15.

Redwood Electric Cooperative exists because of you, and we are dedicated to the people and communities we serve. If you are having difficulty paying your electric bill and do not qualify for either of these programs, please contact Redwood Electric to set up a Cold Weather Rule payment plan.

WILLMAR OFFICE: 320-235-0850

MARSHALL & REDWOOD OFFICE: 507-537-1416

DO YOU NEED TO UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION?

Contact our office by calling 507-692-2214 or email us at office@redwoodelectric.com if:

- You no longer have a landline
- Your cell number has changed
- You have additional phone numbers you want listed
- You have an email address to add
- You can't remember the last time you updated your contact information

**A friendly reminder that it is your responsibility to contact our office to update any account and contact information.*



**Our office will
be closed on
May 31st for
Memorial Day**

Don't Put Safety on Autopilot

Accuracy and consistency when planting make for impressive straight rows that also help maximize potential productivity. Global Positioning System (GPS) technology is helping farmers do just that. It can provide farmers with real-time, accurate location data about a field, which can be used for crop planning, map making, navigation assistance, and tractor guidance. While it can help with driver error, it does not mean that safety can be put on autopilot. Safe Electricity provides tips to help keep farm workers safe.

GPS systems with auto-guidance allow drivers to have their hands off the steering wheel as the tractor maneuvers itself through the field. Thanks to this technology, farmers can more easily and efficiently maintain accuracy even during low light conditions, which enhances productivity.

“It’s important to remember that farming equipment is vulnerable to hitting power lines because of their large size, height, and extensions,” says Rich McCracken, member of the Safe Electricity Advisory Board. “Every farm worker should especially look for low-hanging lines when entering a field, turning in end rows, leaving the field, and driving the equipment home or to a barn.”

In equipment with auto-guidance systems, less focus is needed on steering, which may lead some drivers to think that they do not need to be as aware of navigation issues. However, even while using a GPS with automatic steering, farm workers need to keep safety top of mind and stay focused on their surroundings.

Putting safety first requires alertness, focus, and knowledge of potential hazards and appropriate safety steps. Varying pass-to-pass accuracy levels (sub-meter, decimeter, or centimeter) and potential issues, such as power poles not being correctly plotted in the system, reinforce the need for drivers to stay focused on the location of the tractor and its equipment while in the field and to be ready to take action themselves if necessary.

Regardless of what technology you use on the farm, keep the following electrical safety guidelines in mind:

- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines. A driver’s vantage point from the cab may not be sufficient.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines—at all times, in all directions.
- Look up and use care when raising any equipment such as ladders, front-end loaders, or augers.
- Inspect the height of the farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always remember to lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, contact your utility.
- If your equipment does make contact with a power line, do not leave the cab. Immediately call 911, warn others to stay away, and wait for the utility crew to cut the power.

The only reason to exit equipment that has come into contact with overhead lines is if the equipment is on fire, which is very rare. However, if this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

For more information on electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.safeelectricity.org).

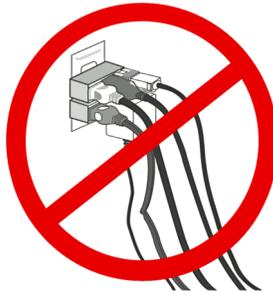


May Is Electrical Safety Month

We use electricity every day. This invisible force has become so commonplace that it can be all too easy to overlook possible electrical hazards, even in the safety of our own homes. May is Electrical Safety Month, and a good time to put the most important safety tool you have—your brain—to work.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration warns that electrical current levels as low as 3 milliamperes can result in injury. In a 2009 report on electrocutions associated with consumer products, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimated an average of 70 fatalities per year (from 2007 to 2009). The most common product categories associated with these electrocutions were small appliances, large appliances, and power tools.

Knowing what to be on the lookout for and knowing the safe steps to take can make all the difference in preventing accidents. Safe Electricity offers the following home safety tips to help arm you with the knowledge to stay safe and help others stay safe.



- Always read and understand the operator's manual before using an appliance or tool.
- Make sure recognized safety laboratories, like UL, ETL, or CSA have certified the electrical appliance, tools, and cords you plan on using.
- Never use a product with a damaged electrical cord.
- Never use extension cords on a permanent basis.
- Only use extension cords properly rated for the devices you plan to plug into it.
- For the safety of children in your home, install tamper-resistant outlets or protective coverings.
- If your outlets are warm to the touch, immediately shut them off at the circuit breaker, and contact a qualified electrician to make repairs.
- Install ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCIs) in areas that may be wet or damp. GFCIs help protect against electrical shock. Use the test and reset button monthly to ensure they are working properly.
- Never use power tools outdoors if it is raining or the ground is wet.
- If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker, or has given you an electrical shock, immediately unplug it and have it repaired or replaced.

To learn more about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Office Hours & Contact Information

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

Phone: 888-251-5100 or 507-692-2214

Email address: office@redwoodelectric.com

Web: www.redwoodelectric.com

SmartHub: redwoodelectric.smarthub.coop

Pay By Phone: 844-846-2696

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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.