

Teach Your Children Electrical Safety



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER CLINT GARDNER

Electricity is a dynamic power source. We live our lives surrounded by it, but sometimes we forget just how dangerous electricity can be. Many home electrical fires, injuries and electrocutions can be prevented when we understand and practice electrical safety. This is especially true for our youngest co-op members.

Throughout the year, Coleman County Electric Cooperative offers many opportunities to help teach youngsters about electricity. But as your children's first and most important teacher, perhaps it's time for you to have a talk with your sons and daughters to reinforce those lessons.

Start at an early age, teaching them about the physical dangers associated with electrical components and how to handle electrical plugs, outlets, switches and other devices. Keep in mind that talking to your children about electrical safety should also include fun activities and facts about the basics—what electricity is, the need to respect its power and how to use it efficiently as they study, work and play.

As we all know, kids will be kids. Getting them to show interest in some of these lessons won't be easy. Just remember that what your children learn from you today can be a lifesaver later when they are tempted to climb up a utility pole, encounter potential hazards like downed power lines in their path, or play hide-and-seek

behind those big metal electrical boxes in the neighborhood.

Gather your youngsters around the kitchen table or on the front porch—some of the best teachable moments about electrical safety can happen in and around your home. Look around. There are plenty of opportunities to demonstrate safety that are as close as the electrical outlet on your living room wall. For example, show young children how plugs work, and let them know that even if they are curious about the slits of an electrical outlet, nothing else should be placed inside.

Each year, about 2,400 children end up in the emergency room after suffering injuries caused by inserting objects—paper clips, pens, screws, nails, forks, hairpins, coins and more—into electrical receptacles. That's about seven children a day who sustain injuries ranging from electric shock to burns.

But this isn't the only electrical mishap that affects youngsters. Our reliance on electronics and gadgets have left both youngsters and their parents at risk when they overcrowd electrical outlets, continue to use frayed wires, place devices near liquids or leave electronics on for long periods of time. Many of the same guidelines we offer to protect adults can also help protect children. We should all set good examples for our youngsters.

And as they grow older, remember to keep teaching your kids about the power of electricity and how to use it safely. Supplement your lessons at home with resources galore, including those provided on our website, colemanelectric.org.



MATTHEW HART | ISTOCK | THINKSTOCK

A slow cooker is a great way to cook without adding excess heat to your home.

Cook Less, Cook Quicker When It's Hot

Cooking and baking during this summer can heat up your house, compete with air conditioning and make everyone uncomfortable. So cooking less can save you energy and keep you cooler.

- ▶ Prepare your main course outside on the barbecue grill. Even if it's hot outdoors, you won't add heat to the inside of your home.

- ▶ When a cooler day or evening rolls in, take the opportunity to cook. Prepare two or three meals at once and freeze them, so all you'll have to do is thaw and reheat them in the microwave the next time it's too hot to cook.

- ▶ Enjoy cold meals and snacks that don't need cooking, like vegetable salads; fruit, cheese and bread; hummus or guacamole with chips or celery; sandwiches; cold soups and smoothies.

- ▶ If you must cook, use the microwave oven or a covered pan on the stovetop. Either one pushes less heat into the kitchen than a hot oven.

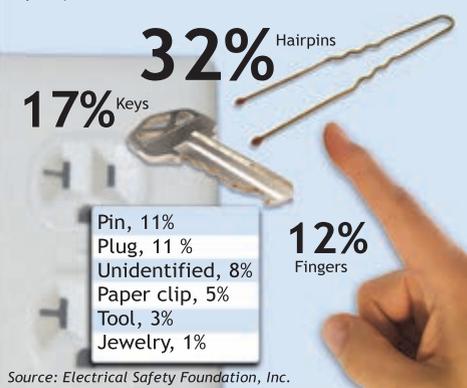
- ▶ Choose foods that cook quickly, like fish and vegetables. Chopping veggies into small, evenly sized pieces speeds cooking time.

- ▶ Don't use the microwave or oven to defrost frozen food. Instead, place the frozen item in the refrigerator and let it thaw out overnight before cooking it the next day.

- ▶ Preparing food in an electric skillet, wok or slow cooker adds less heat to the air than cooking on the stove.

Objects Commonly Placed in Electrical Outlets

Every year, 2,400 children are injured after inserting household objects into electrical outlets. These are the most common objects placed in outlets:



Prevent Wildfires

Wildfires are considered to be one of the most powerful natural disasters known to humanity, and in our state's hot, dry climate, the late summer and early fall seasons are times to exercise extra caution.

Most Texans remember the severe wildfires of 2011, when more than 31,000 fires around the state destroyed 4 million acres of land and thousands of homes and businesses, according to the Texas A&M Forest Service. And more recent fires across the country serve as a deadly reminder that wildfire dangers are ever-present.

Although some fires are caused by lightning—on average, about 10,000 per year nationally—nine out of 10 are caused by humans. But there are things homeowners can do to reduce that risk. Take these measures to help prevent fires from happening near your home.

- ▶ Clear leaves and other debris from gutters, eaves, porches and decks. This prevents stray embers from igniting your home.
- ▶ Remove dead vegetation from under your deck and within 10 feet of the house.
- ▶ Remove anything stored underneath decks or porches.
- ▶ Screen or box in areas below patios and decks with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating.
- ▶ Remove flammable materials (firewood stacks, propane tanks, dry vegetation) within 30 feet of your home's foundation and outbuildings, including garages and sheds. If it can catch fire, don't let it touch your house, deck or porch.

▶ Wildfire can spread to treetops. If you have trees on your property, prune them so that the lowest branches are 6 to 10 feet from the ground.

▶ Keep your lawn hydrated and maintained. If it is brown, cut it down to reduce fire intensity. Dry grass and shrubs are a perfect fuel for wildfires.

▶ Don't let debris and lawn cuttings linger. Dispose of these items quickly to reduce fuel for fire.

▶ Inspect shingles or roof tiles. Replace or repair those that are loose or missing to prevent ember penetration.

▶ Cover exterior attic vents with metal wire mesh no larger than 1/8 inch to prevent sparks from entering the home.

▶ Enclose under-eave and soffit vents or screens with metal mesh to prevent ember entry.

Keep your home and family safe this fire season. For more tips and information, visit Firewise.org.



Nine out of 10 wildfires are caused by humans. Learn what you should do to prevent fires.



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Operating in Brown, Callahan, Coleman, Coke, Concho, Runnels, Taylor and Tom Green counties

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colemanelectric.org

Power Tip

During summer months, our homes can be extremely hot, making living conditions uncomfortable. But while you're putting your air conditioner to work, try adding a ceiling fan into the mix—fans can help you raise your thermostat setting by about 4 degrees and still feel just as comfortable.