

PREVENT HOLIDAY FIRES

Keep your family safe and your holiday season merry with these fire safety tips

Cooking safety in the kitchen

The kitchen is often the heart of holiday celebrations, but it can also be a hot spot for fires. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), cooking equipment is the leading cause of home fires, accounting for nearly 20% of holiday-related incidents. Here’s how to stay safe:

- **Never leave burners or the oven unattended.** Keep a fire extinguisher nearby for emergencies.
- **Ensure children stay away from the kitchen,** where hot appliances and sharp utensils can pose risks.
- **Install smoke detectors** at least 10 feet away from cooking appliances and test them monthly to ensure they’re working.

Be aware of holiday fire risks

The combination of candles, fireplaces, and flammable



decorations increases the risk of fires during the holidays. On average, fire departments respond to 150 Christmas tree-related fires and 790 decoration-related fires annually, according to the NFPA.

Candle safety

- Only burn candles where you can **keep an eye on them.**
- **Extinguish candles before going to bed,** leaving the room, or leaving the house.
- **Use heat-resistant surfaces for candles,** placing

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Deck the Halls SAFELY

- Use only lights, cords, animated displays, and decorations **rated for outdoor use.**
- When decorating outside, **look up and around** for power lines. **Never throw lights** or other decorations into trees near power lines.
- Keep ladders, equipment, and yourself **at least ten feet away** from power lines.
- Cords should be plugged into outlets equipped with **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs).**

For more **holiday safety tips** visit:

**Safe
Electricity.org**

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them out of reach of children and pets.

- **Keep candles away from flammable items** like trees, decorations, curtains, and furniture.
- **Opt for battery-operated candles** near flammable objects.

Christmas tree fire prevention

A beautiful Christmas tree adds to the festive spirit, but it's essential to ensure it's safe.

- **Choose a fresh tree.** Fresh trees have needles that are hard to pull from branches and have a sticky trunk bottom.
- **Keep the tree away from heat sources** such as fireplaces, space heaters, and vents.
- **Check the water level daily** to prevent the tree from drying out.
- **Place the tree away from high-traffic areas** and doorways.
- **If using an artificial tree**, ensure it is labeled as fire-resistant.
- **When discarding a real tree**, place it far from your home and other combustible objects, as dried trees are highly flammable.

Holiday lighting safety

Decorative lights add cheer to the season, but safety is key:

- **Purchase lights from reputable retailers** and ensure they are approved by recognized testing labs like UL or CSA.

- **Only use lights designed for outdoor use** when hanging outside.
- **Use circuits equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs)** for outdoor lights.
- **Avoid water and snow** when using extension cords and outdoor lights.
- **Stay at least 10 feet away from power lines** while hanging lights.
- **Check for broken sockets and frayed wires** before use.
- **Avoid plugging too many devices** into a single outlet.
- **Turn off indoor and outdoor decorations** when going to bed or leaving the house.

Fireplace safety tips

A cozy fireplace is a holiday favorite, but it requires careful handling.

- **Decorate wisely.** Avoid hanging flammable decorations like stockings and greenery directly on the mantel.
- **Perform annual maintenance.** Have your chimney and fireplace checked and cleaned at least once a year.
- **Use a screen.** Install a screen to prevent embers from landing on floors or carpets.
- **Burn responsibly.** Never burn trees, wreaths, or wrapping paper in the fireplace, as they can ignite rapidly and cause flash fires.

By following these fire safety tips, you can enjoy a joyful and safe holiday season with your loved ones.

FROM THE BOARD ROOM

October 2024 Board Meeting Highlights



Monthly Reports:

The Operations report discussed issues with trucks, an update on the County Highway T project, and the underground fault on some older line in the Tilden area. Pole testing has wrapped up and

there are roughly 130 poles to change out in 2025.

The Engagement report included updates on the cooperative's newest member program, The Power Connection. It was well attended, and participants asked good questions. The Co-op Month event, held on October 26 was well attended. Approximately 550 people attended. Discussion on the 2025 Annual Meeting also took place.

The CFO led a discussion on the 10-year financial forecast as well as the monthly financials.

The CEO/General Manager had various updates for open session, including grants and solar projects, upcoming meetings, strategic planning, and the possible phase 2 remodeling project. The WECA

Annual Meeting is scheduled for November 12-13 and the NRECA Annual Meeting is scheduled for March 10-12.

The following items were approved:

- Capital credit estate payout for deceased members.
- Audit committee report of all checks, ACH payments, wire transfers, credit card statements, and investment accounts.
- October PCA charge of roughly \$29,483
- 10-year financial forecast

Other Business:

Director Stokke reported on Dairyland Power activities for the month.

Reviewed the monthly report of new Cooperative members.

Reviewed the monthly educational piece, the NRECA Governance podcast on Remembering Where We Came From.