

CMS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

The Enlightener

CMS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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LIGHTBULB WINNERS

Congratulations to this month's lightbulb winners:

- ▶ Elizabeth Farney
 - ▶ Wanda Fox
 - ▶ Jennalee Gales
 - ▶ Ismael Gomez
 - ▶ Jon Hardy
 - ▶ Tom Harmon
- Contact us today for your free lightbulbs!

NONDISCRIMINATION

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Farm Safety for Kids

Farms and ranches give kids unique opportunities to gain responsibility, independence and strong work ethics. Growing up on a farm helps children develop problem-solving skills, build close family bonds, gain respect for the food cycle, and cultivate a deep passion for the land.

However, agriculture is also one of the most dangerous industries for youth in the U.S. More young people die working in agriculture than in all other industries combined, with a child lost to an agriculture-related incident approximately every three days. Many of these tragedies occur when kids take on tasks that aren't suited to their age or abilities.

The impact of a farm injury or fatality extends beyond the individual, affecting families and entire communities.

The emotional and mental toll can last a lifetime, underscoring the importance of prioritizing safety for everyone.

By implementing safety strategies, farmers, ranchers, families and employees can reap the benefits of farm and ranch life while minimizing risks.

WHY ARE KIDS AT GREATER RISK?

Injuries often occur when children are doing something beyond their mental,

physical or emotional abilities. They are susceptible to certain types of accidents and injuries:

- ▶ Children often work on farms at young ages and in hazardous jobs.
- ▶ Their bodies and brains are still developing, affecting coordination, decision-making and impulse control.
- ▶ Kids tire easily, are more likely to get distracted (think cellphones and social media) and may take risks to prove themselves.
- ▶ Many lack experience and may be reluctant to ask questions or admit uncertainty.

GRAIN BIN DANGERS

Grain bins are especially hazardous. Grain can act like quicksand, trapping and suffocating anyone who enters.

Continued on page 12B ▶



Tractors cause more than **40% OF FATAL FARM ACCIDENTS** involving children.

Think twice before letting kids drive tractors; they are linked to **OVER 40% OF FATAL FARM ACCIDENTS WITH THOSE YOUNGER THAN 15**. Most kids simply aren't big or strong enough to handle them safely. Make sure any youth operating equipment meets age, size and maturity guidelines. **SAFETY FIRST — EVERY TIME.**

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

FARM SMART

Farms and ranches are full of valuable lessons — but also serious risks, especially for kids. More young people die working in agriculture than in all other industries combined, often due to taking on tasks beyond their abilities. Below are five ways to keep kids safe around equipment, animals and chores:



KEEP KIDS OFF TRACTORS

Tractors cause more than 40% of fatal farm accidents involving children. Most kids are not tall or strong enough to operate them safely. Only let youth operate tractors if they meet age, size and maturity guidelines.

SUPERVISE AND RESTRICT ACCESS

Never leave young children alone near work zones. Lock or fence off danger zones like grain bins, pens and machinery.

ASSIGN AGE-APPROPRIATE CHORES

Match tasks to age and maturity. Teens may take risks, so set clear rules and supervise closely.

CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Eliminate slip hazards, lock up keys, limit heavy lifting, and provide protective gear like gloves, non-slip shoes and hearing protection.

MODEL SAFE BEHAVIOR

Teach tasks step-by-step and demonstrate safe habits — kids learn by watching adults.

Make safety a family priority so future generations can enjoy the rewards of farm life with less risk.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFELECTRICITY.ORG

Farm Safety for Kids Continued from page 12A ►

Most youth grain entrapments are fatal. Kids should never enter grain bins or “walk down” grain, and all grain storage areas should be off-limits and secured.

In 2010, in Mt. Carroll, Illinois, four young farm workers, aged 14-20, were sent to loosen clumped grain from inside a grain bin. Three of the youth became entrapped in the grain. Two were engulfed and suffocated, and the third was rescued following a six-hour mission. A settlement of \$16 million was awarded to the affected families. This case led to the formation of the Grain Handling Safety Council, www.GrainSafety.org.

5 ESSENTIAL FARM SAFETY TIPS FOR KIDS:

1 KEEP KIDS OFF TRACTORS.

Tractors are involved in more than 40% of fatal farm accidents involving children under 15. Most kids are not tall or strong enough to operate them safely. Only let youth operate one if they meet safety guidelines for age, size and maturity.

2 SUPERVISE AND RESTRICT ACCESS.

Young children should never be in work areas unsupervised. Fence off or lock hazardous areas like grain bins, animal pens and equipment storage.

3 ASSIGN AGE-APPROPRIATE TASKS.

Match chores to the child's abilities and maturity. Teens are more likely to take risks, so clear guidelines and supervision are essential.

4 CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT.

Remove hazards such as slippery or uneven surfaces, keep equipment

keys out of reach and avoid repetitive motion. Provide protective gear like gloves, non-slip shoes and hearing protection.

5 TRAIN AND MODEL SAFE BEHAVIOR.

Teach kids how to perform tasks safely, practice together until they become proficient, and consistently demonstrate safe habits yourself. Kids learn by watching adults.

FARM SAFETY STARTS WITH OPEN COMMUNICATION

Discuss farm safety regularly with your kids. Clearly explain which areas are off-limits, how to spot hazards, and why following rules is essential. Frequent, open conversations help build safe habits and encourage kids to think before they act.

Conduct safety audits of your farm, ranch and home together. Identifying and fixing hazards not only protects your children but also helps them learn how to prevent injuries.

Supervision is key. Always keep a close eye on children, especially in areas with potential dangers. Remember, learning safe habits takes time and patience — be prepared to repeat instructions to encourage smart, lasting and safe work habits.

For more tips on assigning safe farm tasks to kids, check out the Agricultural Youth Work Guidelines at www.CultivateSafety.org/AYWG.

Farming is more than a job; it's a way of life. By making safety a family priority, we can help ensure that future generations enjoy the rewards of farm life with fewer risks.



SCHEDULE HVAC MAINTENANCE

Now is the perfect time to schedule maintenance for your heating system. HVAC techs are less busy in the fall, making this an excellent time for any necessary updates or repairs. A qualified tech can clean filters, check for leaks and make sure your system is in tip-top shape to keep you cozy this winter.

Keep Food Safe Before, During and After a Storm



national
FOOD SAFETY
EDUCATION MONTH

Storm season can bring power outages, putting your food at risk of spoiling. You can keep your groceries safe and reduce waste with a little preparation.

BEFORE THE STORM

TAKE A FEW PRECAUTIONS:

- ▶ Use appliance thermometers in your fridge and freezer. Safe temps: 40 F (fridge), 0 F (freezer).
- ▶ Freeze water containers to help maintain cold temperatures.
- ▶ Keep coolers, ice packs or ice ready in case of long outages.
- ▶ Consider filling plastic containers with water, leaving an inch of space inside each one, to help keep food cold if the power goes out.

STOCK UP ON READY-TO-EAT FOODS THAT DON'T NEED REFRIGERATION INCLUDING:

- ▶ Bottled water
- ▶ Canned goods such as veggies, fruits, beans and tuna. Don't forget a manual can opener
- ▶ Instant mashed potatoes or oatmeal for carbs and energy
- ▶ Crackers and nuts
- ▶ Dry cereal and powdered milk

DURING AN OUTAGE

In the event of a disaster, it is important to follow a specific sequence for using your available food supply. Start with perishable foods and items from the refrigerator. Following that, turn your attention to the freezer, then begin using nonperishable foods and essential staples.

Losing a fridge full of food is costly, inconvenient and can be dangerous if you're running low on rations.

While you may not be able to save everything, here are ways to preserve food as long as possible:

- ▶ **KEEP DOORS CLOSED.** A fridge keeps food safe for up to 4 hours; a full freezer, up to 48 hours.
- ▶ **USE A COOLER IF THE POWER IS OUT FOR MORE THAN 4 HOURS.** Layer frozen items with fridge foods and ice for a more consistent temperature.
- ▶ **IF YOU DON'T HAVE A COOLER, YOU CAN USE YOUR FREEZER.** Put ice in bowls and place them around the food to prevent melting ice from flooding your freezer. Use blankets to insulate the freezer, but ensure that air vents are unobstructed.
- ▶ **MONITOR TEMPERATURES WITH A THERMOMETER.** Food must stay below 40 F to stay safe.
- ▶ **NEVER TASTE FOOD TO TEST SAFETY.** If it smells, looks or feels off — throw it out.
- ▶ **DON'T USE FOOD THAT TOUCHED FLOODWATER UNLESS IT IS IN WATERPROOF PACKAGING.**

AFTER THE POWER RETURNS

- ▶ Frozen food is safe if it still contains ice crystals or has stayed under 40 F.
- ▶ Don't refreeze or cook food that got too warm.
- ▶ Throw out anything questionable. Use the U.S. Department of Agriculture's guide to learn more about foods you can keep or should throw out after a power outage: www.foodsafety.gov/food-safety-charts/food-safety-during-power-outage.

Staying prepared can help you avoid illness, waste and added stress during a storm.

6 ESSENTIAL TIPS

Keep Your Phone Charged During an Outage



Our phones have become lifelines to the world — use these quick tips to keep them powered up during an outage:

- ▶ **CHARGE AHEAD:** Fully charge your phone before predicted storms or outages.
- ▶ **USE YOUR CAR:** Keep a car charger handy, but only charge devices when the engine is running to avoid draining your car battery.
- ▶ **EMERGENCY GEAR:** Keep a charged portable power bank ready for emergencies. Look for emergency radios and portable speakers that double as charging jacks.
- ▶ **LAPTOP BACKUP:** Use your laptop's USB port to charge your phone (Note: This will drain the laptop battery.)
- ▶ **CONSERVE BATTERY:** Turn off Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, GPS, dim your screen, and use airplane mode or power down to save energy.
- ▶ **ALTERNATIVE CHARGERS:** Use solar-powered or hand-crank chargers for emergency calls.

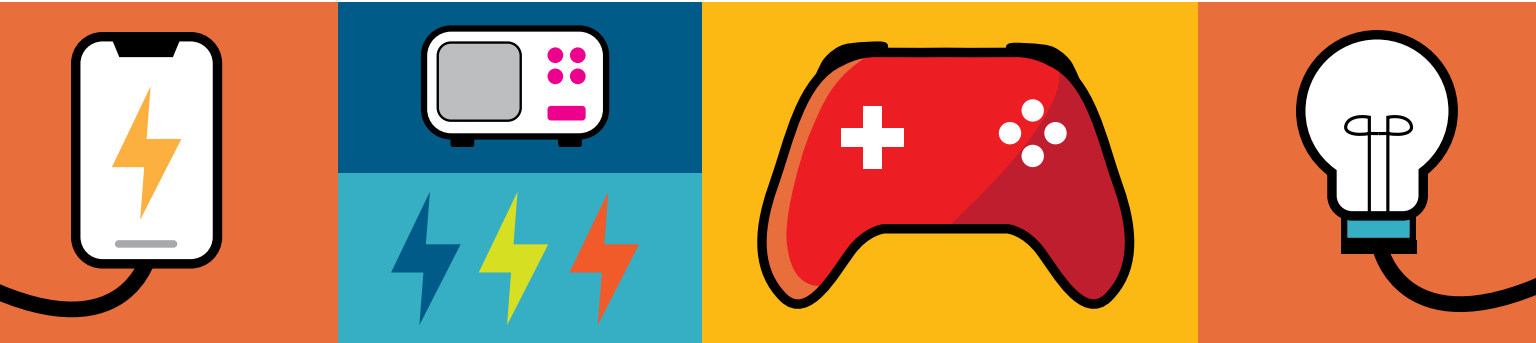
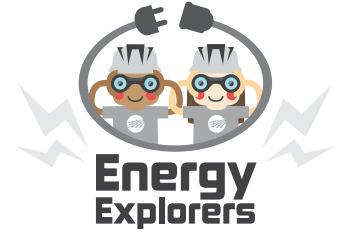
Regularly check your emergency charging gear to ensure it's ready when you need it!

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

The Value of Electricity

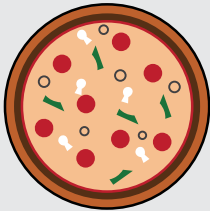
Did you know the average daily cost of electricity is about \$5? When you think about all the ways we use electricity every day, that's a great value!

A DAY'S WORTH OF ELECTRICITY POWERS: HOME HEATING/COOLING, ELECTRONICS, LIGHTING, MAJOR APPLIANCES AND MORE.



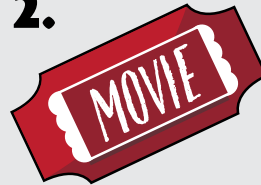
Look at the everyday items below, then add a plus (+) sign next to the items you think cost more than daily electricity. For items you think cost less than daily electricity, add a minus (–) sign.

1.



Large Pizza

2.



1 Movie Ticket

3.



Candy Bar

4.



Video Game

5.



Ice Cream Cone

6.



Plush Toy

ANSWER KEY 1. + 2. + 3. - 4. + 5. - 6. +