



SEMCO NEWS

Avoid overhead electric hazards—look up!

Before you head outside to perform winter cleanup or to play, remember to look up and be alert for power lines and other electrical hazards. It's the best way to stay safe from shock or even electrocution. Accidents happen, but if we educate ourselves and our children, we can keep accidents to a minimum.

For children:

- Never fly a kite on a rainy day or anywhere but an open space. A kite provides an excellent grounding point for lightning and can easily become tangled in power lines.
- Don't climb trees near power lines and poles. Evergreens can disguise dangers this time of year; leaves hide the same hazards during the spring and summer.
- Stay far from power lines lying on



the ground. You can't tell if electricity is still flowing through them.

- Never climb a power pole.
- Obey signs that say "DANGER" or "KEEP OUT" around large electrical equipment, like substations. These signs are commands to keep you safe.

For adults:

- If power lines run through your trees, call Sumter EMC at (800) 342-6978. Professional tree

trimmers with proper protective equipment can trim branches safely.

- Remember that power lines and other utilities run underground too. Call 811 to have utility lines marked before you dig.
- Make sure your outdoor receptacles, or any outlets that could come in contact with water, are ground-fault circuit interrupters, which immediately interrupt power flow when a plugged-in device touches water.
- Use only weather-resistant, heavy-duty extension cords marked for outdoor use.
- Don't leave outdoor power tools unattended for curious children or animals to find.

Sources: Electrical Safety Foundation International, Safe Electricity

Electric heat pumps reduce energy costs all year long

Investing in an electric heat pump is one of the smartest energy decisions you can make, and Southwest Georgia is the perfect place to make your investment pay off. The electric heat pump will heat your home in winter and cool it in summer. It's that simple.

The electric heat pump received its name from its method of operation. It doesn't actually "pump" heat; it extracts heat from the air and transfers it to another space. Only the heat from the air is transferred, not the actual air. Many comparisons are made to solar heat, because the electric heat pump does not generate heat; it transfers heat generated by

the sun. We have abundant sunshine in Georgia, so the electric heat pump is right at home here.

In winter, the heat pump moves heat from the outside to the inside, warming your home. In summer, the process reverses. The heat pump draws heat from your home to the outdoors, cooling your home economically even during the hottest months of summer.

Because the electric heat pump transfers more energy than it consumes, it generates a phenomenal 200 to 300 percent efficiency.

To learn more about electric heat pumps, call Sumter EMC today at (800) 342-6978.



REBATES

are available on a first-come, first-served basis to replace a central system electric or gas furnace with an electric heat pump. Call Sumter EMC to see if you qualify!

Utility notification requirements for contractors, farmers, well drillers and landowners

Contractors and landowners have substantial compliance responsibility when working near an electric utility's underground and overhead distribution power lines. Georgia law and Sumter EMC regulations require contractors and landowners to contact Georgia 811 or, in some cases, Sumter EMC before working near power lines.

Sumter EMC hopes to avoid personal injuries, unnecessary power outages and line damage associated with accidents involving its electric distribution facilities. Contractors can avoid substantial equipment damage and repair costs, as well as personal injuries to their employees, if they abide by these requirements.

These regulations apply to contractors, well drillers, farmers, landowners and others who may have a personal business interest in work performed near power lines. While the following rules address overhead power lines, Georgia law requires that anyone digging in Georgia must contact Georgia 811 at least three days before construction begins, so utility companies can be contacted to mark underground facilities.

High Voltage Safety Act

The High Voltage Safety Act became law in Georgia on July 1, 1992. This act requires individuals performing work within 10 feet of overhead high-voltage electric power lines to notify Georgia 811 during its regular business hours at least 72 hours prior to beginning the work (excluding weekends and holidays).

Georgia 811 will then contact the owner of the power lines to take appropriate safety measures to prevent injuries, property

damage and interruptions of utility service resulting from accidental or inadvertent contact with high-voltage electric lines. Failure to call Georgia 811 constitutes a violation of the law and can result in fines and penalties, in addition to liability for repair of damages.

Contractors are encouraged to become fully familiar with the details of the High Voltage Safety Act. Information is available directly from Georgia 811. Use the same telephone number for notifications or contact them at their website.

Georgia 811
Statewide: 811
Nationwide: 811
www.gaupc.com

Special notice to farmers

Modern farm equipment can be raised or lowered to allow for harvesting greater amounts with fewer delays. Use of this equipment requires that you check fields and roads where your equipment may come within 10 feet of overhead power lines.

The power lines were installed to comply with the National Electrical Safety Code clearance guidelines at the time of construction. If any part of your equipment will be within 10 feet of overhead power lines, you must notify Georgia 811 at least 72 hours before you work under the power lines.

Wells and pumps

Both the well driller and the landowner bear responsibility to notify Georgia 811 when any equipment or materials will be within 10 feet of overhead high-voltage power lines. For safety reasons, installation of wells and well pumps at distances closer than 30 feet from any overhead

power line should generally be avoided, but in locations where the options for well placement are limited, Sumter EMC will help determine the minimum clearance requirements, as specified in the National Electrical Safety Code.

Minimum clearance requirements for the location of wells and well pumps vary according to the line voltage and certain site-specific attributes, and Sumter EMC should be consulted to determine the appropriate minimum recommended distance. Clearance requirements vary with the voltage of the power line, whether or not the line is insulated, the height of the line above ground, the distance to poles that support the line and other local factors that determine where a drilling rig will be stationed for installation and future maintenance or pump replacement activities.

A Sumter EMC representative will meet with the well driller and/or landowner to determine the minimum acceptable distance if the desired pump location is closer than 30 feet from an overhead line.

Easements

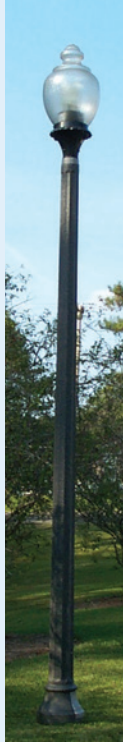
Sumter EMC's Service Rules and Regulations require the contractor to notify Sumter EMC directly if proposed work and/or construction will be performed inside the utility's easement. In most cases, the easement extends 20 feet on each side of the power line. Sumter EMC will provide the necessary protection to avoid hazards. Again, consideration should be given to providing plenty of time to respond.

Call Sumter EMC's Engineering Department at (229) 924-8041 or (800) 342-6978 and ask to speak with a representative.

Outdoor light

Apply for a new outdoor light installation from Sumter EMC, agree to keep the outdoor light for at least 12 months after the free period and get the first three months' service free! We will install your new outdoor light within 10 working days and pay for the first three months of service. After that, you will pay a small monthly charge that covers all electricity used by the light and all routine maintenance and bulb replacement.

Fees for decorative fixtures, special installations, underground service and line extensions are not part of this promotion.



Replace portable space heaters

Many people use space heaters as a convenient source of warmth in winter months. However, space heaters can be dangerous if not used properly. If you're using an electric space heater bought before 1991, it's time to replace it. Newer space heaters include safety features like tip-over switches that help prevent fires.

No matter how old your portable electric heaters are, take these precautions:

- Place heaters on the floor rather than propping them up on furniture, where they can fall.
- Keep the heater at least 3 feet from flammable items such as curtains, furniture or bedsreads.
- Select a space heater with a guard around the heating element.
- Fit the heater's plug snugly into the outlet. A loose plug can overheat.
- Don't hide cords under carpets or place anything on top of the cord; this can cause the cord to overheat.
- When buying a heater, choose one that has been tested and certified by a nationally recognized testing institution such as Underwriters Laboratories.
- Read and follow the manufacturer's operating instructions.
- Buy a heater that can handle the area you want to heat.
- Keep heaters out of moist places like bathrooms unless you buy one specifically designed for that purpose. Moisture can corrode heater parts, which can lead to fires and shocks.
- Keep children and pets away from space heaters.
- Never leave a space heater unattended, and never go to sleep with a space heater on.
- Never attempt to repair a broken heater. Buy a new one or take the broken unit to a professional repair shop.



BUILDER REBATES



Sumter EMC offers a rebate of up to \$500 to builders and individuals who purchase \$1,200 in appliances from Sumter EMC and build new total electric homes that are served by Sumter EMC.

Call for details and be sure to ask about our free water heater program too.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



According to the Consumer Electronics Association, the average household owns 24 consumer electronics products, which use 12 percent of household electricity. ENERGY STAR-certified audio/video equipment is up to 50 percent more efficient than conventional models.



—Source: EnergyStar.gov