

Electric News

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Clean Electrical Hazards Out of Your Home

What is your New Year's resolution this year? How about trying something easy like removing risk factors for electrical shocks, tripping and house fires from your home.

Here are 10 simple ways to keep this resolution and protect your family from harm:

- 1. Secure plugs.** When loose-fitting plugs hang halfway out of an outlet, they put you at risk of an electrical shock and can even start a fire. Replace older outlets and insert plastic safety caps into unused outlets if your family includes young children.



- 2. Use three-prong plugs, especially outdoors, and in bathrooms, basements and kitchens.** The third prong is a grounding outlet. If you only have two-prong outlets, ask an electrician to update your home. *Never remove the grounding pin to fit a three-prong plug into a two-prong outlet.*

- 3. Replace cords.** Cords are not designed to last forever. Toss frayed or cracked cords, and move them out from under carpets or rugs.

- 4. Avoid extension cords.** They're fine for connecting strands of holiday lights and helping decorations reach plugs during December. But come Jan. 1, pack them up and store them. Extension cords are designed for temporary use.



- 5. Pay attention to wattages.** The lightbulbs in your lamps and overhead fixtures should match the specifications on those fixtures. If a bulb's wattage is too high, it can overheat.
- 6. Add GFCIs.** Ground-fault circuit interrupters, or GFCIs, are a must-have in every outlet in the kitchen, bathrooms, laundry, basement, garage and outdoors.



- 7. Resize your fuses.** If you don't know whether your fuses are the right size for the circuit they're protecting, call an electrician.
- 8. Update appliances.** If a circuit trips every time you plug in your hair dryer, or if your coffee maker has ever shocked you when you plugged it in, you either have faulty appliances or an overloaded circuit. An electrician can identify and solve your problem.



- 9. Check your wiring.** Faulty electrical wires start many house fires. If you hear popping or sizzling sounds behind the walls, or if light switches feel hot, do not use those fixtures or switches until a licensed electrician has replaced them.
- 10. Get more power.** Unless you live in a brand-new house, you are probably using more electricity than the builder ever dreamed you would. Call an electrician to determine whether your home needs more electrical capacity.

Volunteer at Your Electric Co-op

What do you do to contribute to the success of your electric membership cooperative? You own it, after all.

Consumers who get their electricity from an electric membership cooperative are known as consumer-members. That's because a cooperative is a membership organization, and every household that belongs to it—by virtue of where you get your electricity—is a part owner.

In fact, the board of directors at your electric utility is made up of consumer-members like you. So, you could run for a seat on the board and have a say in how the utility operates.

Not for you? Consumer-member also get to vote for the neighbors they think will do the best job on the board of directors.

Your cooperative may also hold an annual membership meeting,



where you can meet the managers and employees, hear how the cooperative is faring and socialize with neighbors. Do you attend?

Your cooperative offers lots of ways to get involved, from volunteering for projects that help consumer-

members who need assistance to tagging along to events for local teenagers and service on special committees of consumers and advising the board.

Make a New Year's resolution to get involved with your cooperative!

Alarms Could Save Your Life

If your home has a fireplace or any gas appliances, you should install carbon monoxide alarms in or near every bedroom. The CO alarm will react when it senses that carbon monoxide levels in your home are too high, usually because an appliance is malfunctioning. CO alarms do not detect gas leaks.

Here are eight tips for ensuring your CO alarm works when you need it:

1. Replace your alarms every five years. Most warranties cover only five years.
2. Replace your batteries at least once a year, or when the device starts making a "chirping" sound. That's usually a symptom of a low battery.



3. Test the alarm regularly by pressing the test button and holding it down for 20 seconds.
4. Locate CO alarms at least 10 feet away from sources of humidity like showers and bathrooms, where steam can cause them to overreact.
5. Place a CO alarm on every level of the house and at the top of the basement stairs, even if there are no

bedrooms on those floors.

6. Do not put a CO alarm in the garage, kitchen or the room with your gas furnace.
7. If your alarm goes off too often, it probably means it's too close to a fireplace or a gas furnace or stove. It also could mean that your gas appliances are not burning fuel completely. If you see a yellow or orange pilot light, that could be the case. Call a plumber to check it out.
8. Leave the alarm plugged in all year, not just during heating season. Your gas stove, clothes dryer and water heater also are potential sources of CO leaks. And a running car in the garage can cause a CO problem in the home.

February Is American Heart Month

As soon as Christmas is over, stores and businesses will start decorating with hearts in preparation for Valentine's Day.

But February isn't just about romance. It's also American Heart Month and all about keeping your heart healthy by eating nutritious food, and regulating blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

Even if your New Year's resolution to eat healthier and exercise regularly is already a distant memory, February is a great time to kick-start your healthy heart routine.

The electric appliances you



might already have in your kitchen can help.

For example, a multicooker like the Instant Pot can steam and air fry meat and vegetables without oil. A slow cooker can prepare chicken and beef dishes without added fats, too, if you let them simmer in broth, juice or another liquid, and let the meal stew all day.

An electric indoor grill draws fat from meat into a drip pan below the grate instead of using it to cook the dish. And a blender

with blades sharp enough to shred ice makes it simple to whip up smoothies for breakfast and snacks so you and your family get plenty fruits and veggies, even in the morning.

This February, redefine romance to include helping your family get and stay healthy. Recommit to those New Year's resolutions and celebrate American Heart Month by protecting your heart and those of your loved ones.

Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*



Area rugs are an easy, cost-effective solution to cold floors. Adding area rugs to hard-surface flooring can add warmth to any room and keep your feet cozy on cold winter days.

Choose rugs made from wool or other natural fibers and plush or high-pile textures for the most insulation. Place rugs in areas where you need additional warmth, like the foot of a bed or under a coffee table. Area rugs can enhance the aesthetic of your home and keep you cozier.



Romance and Energy-Savings: A Valentine's Day Win-Win

Got romance on your mind this Valentine's Day? Why not save some energy while you're cozying up with your partner?



Here's a few tips to help:

Turn off the TV. Sure, watching a romantic movie is a great way to spend time together on a day designed for couples. Even better: sitting close, talking and truly engaging with one another. As long as you've got the TV turned off, go ahead and unplug it to save even more energy. Even devices that are turned off still draw some electricity if they're plugged in.

Inspect your heating system. If you didn't get around to calling an HVAC tech for a tuneup in the fall, it's not too late. Make sure your stay-at-home Valentine's Day date stays cozy. A system check-up can stop problems before they shut the heat off and spoil the warm feelings that this special day brings.

Dim the lights. It used to be that only energy-hogging incandescent lightbulbs worked with a dimmer switch. But now, even LED lights can be dimmable. Dimming the lights not only saves energy, but it can extend the life of the bulbs. And it creates a romantic setting for a candlelight dinner for two.

Perfect Time for New Habits

Mid-winter is the perfect time to break bad habits when it comes to using electricity around the house.

For example, are you still using the extension cords you unpacked when you decorated your house for the December holidays? If so, put them back in their boxes; extension cords are designed for temporary use only. And if you're hiding them under rugs, they could be getting frayed and damaged, which is a fire hazard.

It's never the wrong time of year to seal leaks around windows, doors and penetrations in walls where wires and cables enter the house. Use caulk and weatherstripping, and engage your children in this energy efficiency exercise. It will teach them how to conserve energy and use it wisely.

Finally, consider making energy-efficient home improvements around the house before remodeling season emerges with spring weather and contractors are hard to hire. Have a programmable thermostat installed; replace any old, single-pane windows you still have in your house; and add insulation to the attic.



Recipe of the Month

Chocolate Bourbon Pecan Pie Bars

Courtesy of Georgia Grown

Crust ingredients

8 ounces unsalted butter
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 cups all-purpose flour

Topping ingredients

3/4 cup sorghum syrup
3/4 cup light brown sugar
2 farm eggs
2 tablespoons butter, melted
1 tablespoons vanilla extract
1 ounce ASW Resurgens Rye bourbon
2 1/2 cups pecan pieces
4 ounces chocolate chips

Instructions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a 9×13-inch baking dish with parchment paper and spray with cooking spray. Brown butter in a pan, about 5-8 minutes over medium-high heat. Allow to cool for 5 minutes. In a large bowl, combine browned butter, sugar, vanilla and salt. Mix together. Gradually stir in flour until mixture is crumbly and begins to stick together. Press into the bottom of prepared pan and bake for 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, whisk sorghum syrup, brown sugar, eggs, melted butter, vanilla and bourbon together in a medium bowl. When crust has finished baking, remove from oven and sprinkle chocolate chips and pecan pieces evenly over the crust. Pour sugar mixture over pecans and chocolate, and spread evenly and gently with a spatula over the crust. Return to oven and bake for 30 minutes. Remove from oven and cover with foil, then return to oven and bake 10 minutes longer. Remove from oven and allow to cool. Chill in refrigerator for 2 hours, then cut into bars and serve. Makes 9 desert-sized bars or 18 snacking bars.

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