

# Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives  
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

## Claverack REC

570-265-2167

1-800-326-9799

Email: [mail@claverack.com](mailto:mail@claverack.com)

Website: <http://www.claverack.com>

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### Office Hours

Monday through Friday

7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Jeff Fetzer, CCC, Local Pages Editor

## Guest Column



# Safely controlling uncontrolled electricity

By Pete Yastishock, *Director of Safety & Compliance*

ELECTRICITY is one of the most effective and safest power sources available when properly used. But when uncontrolled, that power can be an unseen and unpredictable hazard.

Let's look at some hazards that can result from one simple example of uncontrolled electricity: a tree falling over in a storm and pulling down the power line.

The most important thing to remember is that anytime you encounter a downed wire, whatever the cause, do not go near it. Just because a downed power line is not arcing or buzzing doesn't mean it is dead. That line lying on the ground very well could be fully energized, and even a trained lineman who works with electricity every day cannot tell if a line is energized just by looking at it.

The reason utilities warn the public to keep their distance from downed lines is because electricity can flow through the ground, as far as 30 feet away from the downed wire.

So what should you do if you encounter downed lines? Do not let people or pets within 30 feet of the downed wire, and call the local electric utility immediately.

What if the tree is just lying against the line but hasn't brought the wires down? Again, this is another hazardous situation you should steer clear of because both the tree and the ground around it can be energized. In this case, the tree can become an electrical conductor, and power can flow

through it and energize the entire area surrounding the tree. Again, should you encounter a tree that is in contact with an electric line, stay at least 30 feet away from the tree and call your local utility.

In addition to the potential electrical hazard that can occur when a tree comes to rest on an electric line, there is also a chance that the weight of the tree could eventually pull down the wire or cause a pole to topple. Even if the line were de-energized, falling wires or poles carry a lot of weight and force and could seriously hurt anyone in the vicinity as well as along the power line. Again, the safest approach is to stay clear of the area and the power line right-of-way.

Another potential electrical hazard that can occur during outages involves improper use of backup generators.

The National Electrical Code requires that a double-throw transfer switch be installed in conjunction with every back-up generator in order to prevent electricity from backfeeding into the electric system. If you simply plugged a generator into an outlet in your home without using a transfer switch, that 120 or 240 volts being generated can flow back into our electric distribution system, exposing linemen making repairs to unleashed electricity!

Being ready to know what to do, and what not to do, with electricity will help ensure you are in control and safe. 

# Co-op available for electrical safety demonstrations

THE MANY benefits of electricity are well known. It provides light, heat and cooling for the home or office. It keeps refrigerators and other appliances running. It powers television sets, stereos and computer systems.

But electricity also has a dangerous side, and Claverack works year-round to shed light on some of the hazards associated with electricity.

The cooperative provides safety talks and electrical safety demonstrations free of charge to schools, youth groups, fire companies, and other organizations each year.

The co-op can tailor safety demonstrations to meet the needs of its intended audience. For schools, youth organizations and service organizations, the co-op's Safety City tabletop display is an ideal way to learn about some of the hazards of electricity in a small-group setting.

Safety City visually demonstrates the dangers of overhead power lines and other utility equipment in everyday settings around the home, farm and community.

The display is particularly effective at teaching school-age children the importance of staying away from power lines. Students can see firsthand what happens when a ladder or kite



**THE RIGHT TOUCH:** Claverack member service quality specialist Karen Evangelisti provides a hands-on safety demonstration to a visually impaired student at Rosland Elementary School in Tunkhannock during a recent visit to the school for a Safety City presentation.

## OFFICE CLOSING

All Claverack offices will be closed on Monday, May 29, in observance of Memorial Day.

come into contact with a live wire on the display. Safety City demonstrations typically take 30 to 45 minutes.

For larger audiences, Claverack demonstrates a variety of outdoor electrical hazard situations using its high-voltage safety trailer.

The mobile safety trailer replicates an electric distribution system from the substation to a member's home and incorporates many of the devices that can be found on an electric system. During high-voltage safety demonstrations, lineworkers demonstrate a variety of electrical contact scenarios

involving animals, trees, ladders and equipment.

The co-op has conducted high-voltage safety demonstrations at annual meetings, county fairs and local fire departments over the years. Please note that the electrical safety trailer has specific electrical connection requirements that may not be available at all locations.

If you or your group is interested in learning more about Claverack's electrical safety demonstrations, contact the member services department at 1-800-326-9799. ⚡



RECOGNITION: Claverack President & CEO Bobbi Kilmer, left, congratulates employees for achieving years-of-service milestones in 2016 during the co-op's annual safety awareness and employee recognition breakfast held March 31 at the co-op's Wysox office. Pictured are, from left, Kilmer; Rich Valentine, 10 years of service; Greg Wilcox, 15 years; Kylie Slater, 15 years; and Bonnie Fox, 30 years.

## Co-op offers scholarship to MU students

Applications are being accepted for a \$1,000 scholarship that is available for the 2017-2018 academic year to a Mansfield University student who is a Claverack member or dependent.

To be eligible for consideration, students must:

- ▶ be enrolled full time at Mansfield University
- ▶ demonstrate financial need
- ▶ be a member or dependent of a member of Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative
- ▶ demonstrate the highest traits of leadership, citizenship and character.

Students can apply online by visiting our homepage, [www.claverack.com](http://www.claverack.com), and clicking on Scholarships under the "Your Community" drop-down menu at the top of the screen.

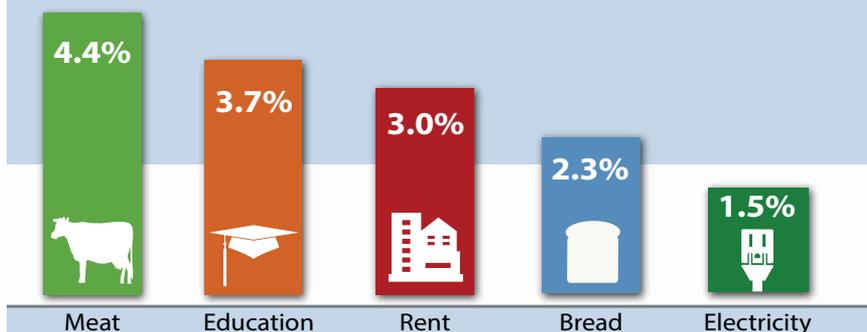
Claverack endowed the scholarship fund at Mansfield University in 2000, with a goal of providing financial assistance to any Claverack member or dependent pursuing a degree at the university.

A member of the State System of Higher Education, Mansfield University attracts many students from throughout the cooperative's service territory.

## Electricity Remains a Good Value

The cost of powering your home rises at a slower pace than many of your typical expenses. Compare the average price increase of these expenses each year over the last five years, and the value of electricity shines.

 **Average Annual Price Increase**  
2010-2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index

# Reporting a power outage

EVEN WITH the advances of our computerized outage management system, members still play a vital role in the co-op's power restoration efforts.

The first thing you want to do when you lose power is call the cooperative at 1-800-326-9799 to report the outage. Please don't assume we know you are out of power or that your neighbors called in to report the outage. Also, please don't report the outage to our Facebook site because it is not monitored at all times. The only way we know for sure when someone is out of power is when they call.

When you call to report an outage,

the more information you are able to provide, the sooner Claverack can have you and your neighbors back on-line.

Here are seven simple steps to follow when an outage occurs:

1. Never attempt to fix or move an electric line yourself. Fallen lines often remain energized. Contact with live wires can result in injury or death.
2. Check your circuit breakers and fuses. If nothing appears out of the ordinary, it's time to call the cooperative.
3. Call 1-800-326-9799 to report an outage. This number is answered by our operators 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
4. Provide the telephone number of the account that is out of service. Our operators can quickly pull up your account information and map

location by typing your telephone number into the outage management system.

5. Report when you lost power. Also tell us if all or only some of your lights are out, or whether your lights are flickering or dim.
6. Check on your neighbors. If possible, tell the Claverack operator whether or not your neighbors have electricity.
7. Be sure to tell our operators any additional information that may be related to the outage or helpful to our crews. Report the occurrence of downed lines, trees on electric wires, sparking transformers, flashes of light, explosions or unusual noises, broken poles, tree-blocked roadways, car accidents, etc. ⚡

## Generate safely

To ensure the safety of our lineworkers, Claverack requires that backup power sources such as standby and portable generators must be completely isolated from the cooperative's power lines to avoid backfeeding electricity into the co-op's distribution system.

During an outage, line workers trying to restore power, or anyone who contacts a downed line, could be seriously injured or killed by backfeed from an improperly installed generator.

Properly isolating your generator from the co-op's electric lines requires the installation of a double-throw transfer switch, which must be installed by a professional electrician.

The switch makes it impossible to connect the main power source to the generator. Its use is required by the National Electric Code when connecting an auxiliary power source to an existing system.

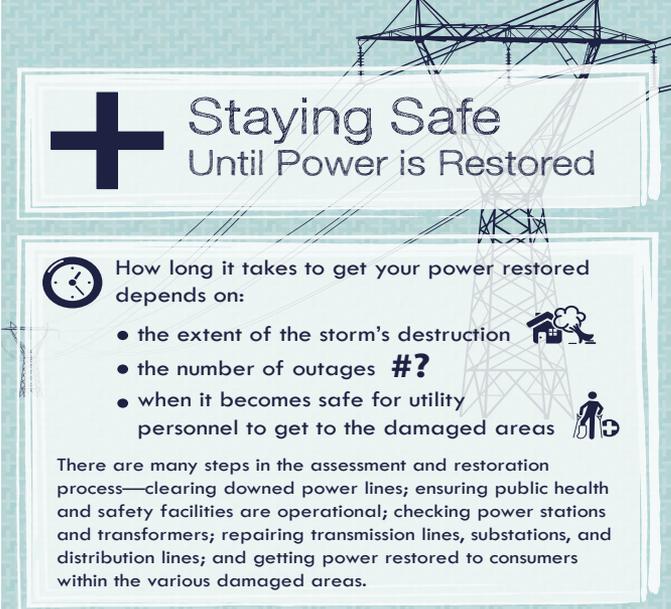
If you have questions about the proper installation of an emergency generator, contact Claverack's engineering department at 1-800-326-9799. For additional information about generators, visit our web site at [www.claverack.com](http://www.claverack.com).



**WARNING!**

**Never connect a portable electric generator directly to your home's wiring.**

Portable generators can be deadly when improperly installed. Claverack REC **strongly encourages** our members to have a licensed electrician install the equipment necessary to safely connect emergency generators.

## Staying Safe Until Power is Restored

How long it takes to get your power restored depends on:

- the extent of the storm's destruction
- the number of outages #?
- when it becomes safe for utility personnel to get to the damaged areas

There are many steps in the assessment and restoration process—clearing downed power lines; ensuring public health and safety facilities are operational; checking power stations and transformers; repairing transmission lines, substations, and distribution lines; and getting power restored to consumers within the various damaged areas.

### Storm Safety Kit

- Drinking water & food
- Blankets, pillows, & clothing
- Basic first-aid supplies
- Prescriptions
- Basic toiletries
- Flashlights
- Battery-operated radio
- Battery-operated clock
- Extra supply of batteries
- Phone
- Cash and credit cards
- Emergency numbers
- Important documents (in a waterproof container)
- Toys, books, & games
- Baby supplies
- Pet supplies

Stay safe until we can restore power to you. Claverack and our partner, Safe Electricity, recommend the following safety precautions:

- Stay far away and keep others away from downed power lines. Just because they are damaged **does not mean they are dead!**
- Never enter a flooded room if electrical outlets are submerged. **The water could be energized.**
- **Do not** turn power off if you must stand in water to do so.
- Before entering storm-damaged buildings, **make sure electricity and gas are turned off.**
- If you clean-up outdoors after a storm, **do not use electric equipment** when it is wet out.
- If you are driving and come upon a downed power line, **stay away and keep others away.** Contact emergency personnel or your utility company to address the downed power line.
- If your vehicle comes in contact with a downed power line, **do not leave the car!** Wait for utility professionals to make sure the power line is de-energized before exiting the car.