

# NorVal News

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative   
This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## Budget Billing

**BUDGET BILLING  
OPEN ENROLLMENT  
BEGINS IN APRIL!  
IF YOU ARE  
INTERESTED IN  
SIGNING UP, PLEASE  
GIVE OUR BILLING  
CLERK, MELISSA, A  
CALL.**

## Play it Safe

### 10 Do's and Don'ts When Using Portable Generators

Storm season is upon us, which means greater potential for power outages. If you're planning to use a portable generator in the event of an outage, NorVal Electric reminds you to play it safe.

With proper use and maintenance, portable generators can provide great convenience during an outage. However, when generators are used incorrectly, they can be extremely hazardous. In a 2022 report, the Consumer Product Safety Commission estimated 85 U.S. consumers die every year from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning caused by gasoline-powered portable generators.

Here are 10 do's and don'ts to keep in mind when using portable generators:

1. **DO:** Install backup CO alarms.
2. **DO:** Keep children and pets away from portable generators at all times.
3. **DO:** Position generators at least 25 feet outside the home, away from doors, windows and vents that can allow CO to enter the home.
4. **DO:** Ensure your generator is properly grounded. Use a portable ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) to prevent electric shock injuries.
5. **DO:** Use three-pronged extension cords that are rated to handle the load of the generator. Inspect extension cords for cuts, frays or other damage before use.
6. **DON'T:** Operate a generator inside your home or an enclosed (or partially-enclosed) space. Generators produce high levels of CO, which can be deadly.
7. **DON'T:** Open windows or doors while the generator is running.
8. **DON'T:** Rely on generators as a full-time source of power. They should only be used temporarily or in emergency situations to power essential equipment or appliances.
9. **DON'T:** Overload generators. They should only be used to power essential equipment. Make sure your generator can handle the load of the items you plan to power.
10. **DON'T:** Connect generators directly into household wiring unless you have an appropriate transfer switch installed. If a generator is connected to a home's wiring without a transfer switch, power can back feed along power lines and electrocute utility line workers making repairs.

While generators provide convenience during power outages, they can quickly become hazardous--even deadly--if improperly operated. Before you operate a portable generator, be sure to thoroughly read the owner's manual for important safety information and tips.

If you have questions about proper use of portable generators, we're here to help. Give us a call at [406-228-9351](tel:406-228-9351) or contact us at [norval@norval.coop](mailto:norval@norval.coop) or [norval.coop/contact-us](http://norval.coop/contact-us). 



**Nick's Notes**  
 By Nick Dulaney,  
 Line Superintendent

Fog, freezing rain and frost. The three "f's" our crews are hoping not to hear again this winter. At the end of January, we experienced heavy frost and freezing rain on our lines causing outages across our system. Crews were working 20-hour days in order to restore power to our members. Even though we had many members out of power, we did not lose any structures and the wind stayed at bay so we did not have a system-wide outage. We want to give a huge thank you to all of our members for their patience and the extra eyes as we narrowed down the cause of the outages.

As the outages subsided, our crews have turned their attention to clearing right-of-ways, service retirements and preventative maintenance on our fleet vehicles and all equipment. This month, we will have the opportunity to train our local fire departments with what to do during an emergency involving downed power lines. We are also looking into having demonstrations at schools in our service territory. If this is something you would like to have at your school, please call the office for more information and availability. 🙏



Know what's below.  
 Call before you dig.



Lineman Ole with frosted power lines



Linemen Kyle and Joe restoring downed line

**A Solid Investment in Your Electric Co-op**

As a member of NorVal Electric, you make an investment in the co-op every time you pay your bill. This collective investment in the co-op benefits you and the community immediately and over time. So what exactly is this monthly investment, and how do you benefit from it?

The base charge is a monthly investment that helps your co-op cover the expenses of maintaining the overall electric system. Combatting cyber security threats and maintaining poles, wires, substations and co-op equipment takes strategic planning and significant resources. The base charge essentially ensures that all equipment operates properly and staff is trained and ready so the lights turn on when you need them.

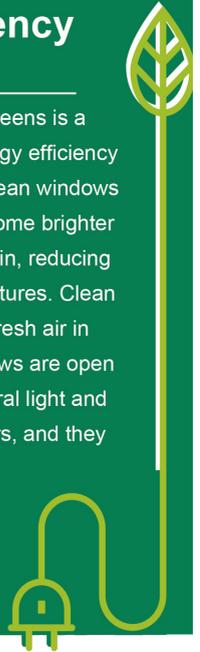
Regardless of how much electricity a particular family uses, the cost of delivering power to that house is the same. As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, we believe the operational costs should be spread fairly and equitably across all of our members, regardless of the level of electricity use. That is why every member pays the base charge each month to cover basic operational costs. All members are charged a base charge for the cost of operation since all members benefit from electric services. In essence, this gives each co-op member an equal share in NorVal Electric's operation.

Your monthly investment ensures you have access to safe, reliable and affordable power when you need it. We appreciate and value the investment that you make in the co-op each month, and we strive to use that investment wisely for the benefit of all members of our community.

**Energy Efficiency**  
 Tip of the Month

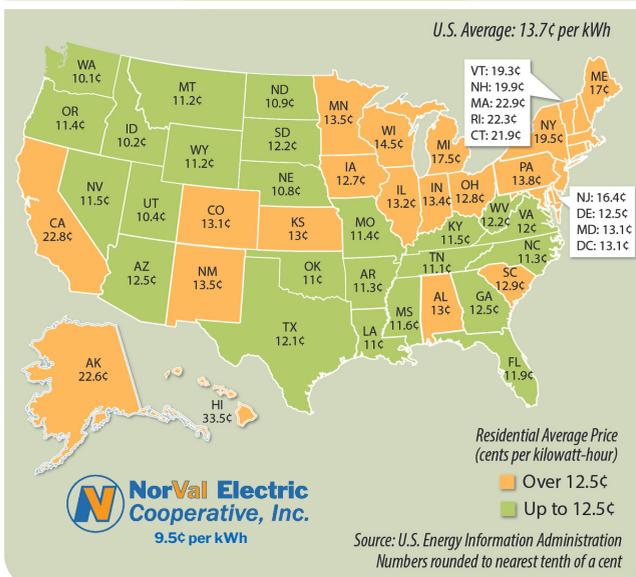
Washing windows and screens is a great way to practice energy efficiency during spring cleaning. Clean windows and screens make your home brighter by allowing more sunlight in, reducing the need for lamps and fixtures. Clean screens also allow more fresh air in the home when the windows are open to recycle indoor air. Natural light and clean air are energy savers, and they enhance overall health and productivity.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



**Average Prices for Residential Electricity**

2021 figures, in cents per kWh



**DID YOU KNOW?**

**NorVal Electric will rebate \$150.00 to any member who installs a new electric water heater, or will rebate \$250.00 to any member who replaces their non-electric water heating system with an electric water heater. If you are interested or have questions, please call the office!**