

This May, Plug Into Safety



MESSAGE FROM YOUR GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO DEBRA A. COLE

THIS MONTH, I'D LIKE TO TAKE A MOMENT to reflect on the importance of safety. We all depend on electricity to power our lives, but accidents can happen when electricity is improperly used.

May is National Electrical Safety Month, and throughout the month, HILCO Electric Cooperative will work to raise awareness about the dangers of electricity. Visit our website, hilco.coop, and our Facebook page to see safety tips and reminders.

Our Responsibility to You

We care deeply about the well-being of our members and encourage you to plug into safety especially this month. Thousands of people in the U.S. are critically injured or killed each year as a result of electrical fires, accidents and electrocution in their own homes, according to the Electrical Safety Foundation International.

To promote safety education in our local communities, we conduct safety programs for local schools and other groups. We provide electrical safety content in *Texas Co-op Power*, and we encourage the public to contact us if they see a downed power line or any other type of dangerous electrical situation. We strive to provide our communities with safe, reliable and affordable electricity and serve as your trusted energy advisor, now and well into the future.

Our Responsibility to Employees

It is no accident that safety is a top priority at your electric co-op. We are committed to a culture of safety that is integral to our daily operations. We participate in programs and follow specific guidelines and protocols for electrical safety that are considered leading practices. Our lineworkers are required to wear personal protective equipment at all times when on the job.

This includes special fire-resistant clothing that will self-extinguish, limiting potential injuries from burns and sparks. Insulated and rubber gloves are worn in tandem to protect from electrical shock. Our safety team regularly discusses important safety issues pertaining to work in our buildings and out in the field.

As the general manager and CEO of HILCO EC, I believe it is my duty and responsibility to raise awareness about the importance of electrical safety. Take a moment to plug into safety. Please visit hilco.coop for tips about how to keep yourself and your loved ones safe.



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Operating in Dallas, Ellis, Hill, Johnson and McLennan counties

GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO

Debra A. Cole

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FIND US ON THE WEB

hilco.coop

MEMORIAL DAY

Monday, May 29

HILCO EC would like to honor the memory of service members and their families who have sacrificed to protect the freedom we enjoy.



May Bulletin

May 12

Red Oak Chamber Golf Tournament

May 20

Midlothian

Horsepower Poker Run. 10 a.m.-7 p.m.
PawsForReflectionRanch.org



CHARLIEAJA | ISTOCK.COM

from HILCO EC
Sunday, May 14

"A mother's love endures through all."
—Washington Irving

Beat the Peak Begins in June



SAVE ENERGY AND EXPENSE

Reduce electricity use 4-8 p.m.
when peak usage is highest.

BILLING SCHEDULE

Payments are due by close of business at 5 p.m. on the due date.

CYCLE 1

Billing Date May 2
Due Date May 18

CYCLE 2

Billing Date May 9
Due Date May 25

CYCLE 3

Billing Date May 16
Due Date June 1

CYCLE 13

Billing Date May 17
Due Date June 1

CYCLE 4

Billing Date May 23
Due Date June 8

Remembering William Watson

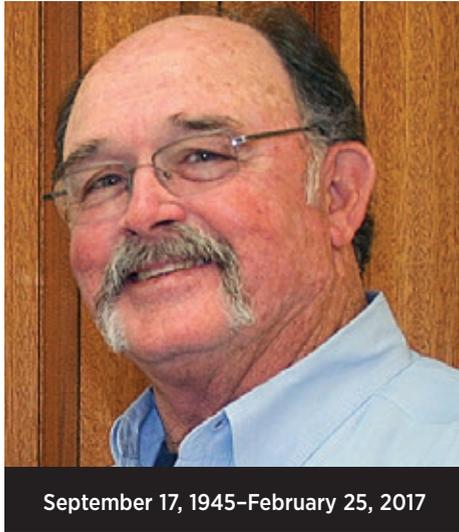
WILLIAM WATSON began his co-op career in 1963 with Hill County Electric Cooperative, then called “the REA.” Assistant Manager Ralph Bailey hired Watson as a lineman for \$1.35 an hour just three weeks after his 18th birthday and his graduation from Blum High School. Co-op founder Earl Farrow was the general manager at the time.

Watson served the cooperative under seven managers and two interim managers during his 47 years of employment at the cooperative. He held various positions in the operations and engineering departments and was named HILCO Director of Operations and Engineering in July 2007.

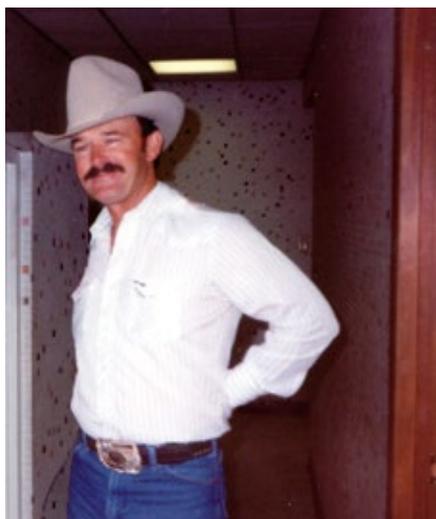
Watson was responsible for HILCO’s 30 skilled linemen and engineering staff, and its overhead, underground and right-of-way contractors. Although he retired from HILCO EC in 2011, he remained a great mentor and friend to many at the co-op. Once, when he was asked what he liked best about HILCO, he replied with his trademark smile: “It’s home.”

“William dedicated over 47 years of his life to the cooperative. William was a true example of the Cooperative Principle ‘Concern for Community.’ He was always willing to lend a helping hand to a friend or co-worker in need. It was because of the many dedicated men and women such as William that allowed the cooperative to be such a huge success. Thank you to William for his many years of service and loyalty. Thank you to his family for all the many late nights and weekends that he spent on the job. Our hearts will always be filled with gratitude, fond memories and love for William and his family.”

—General Manager and CEO Debra Cole

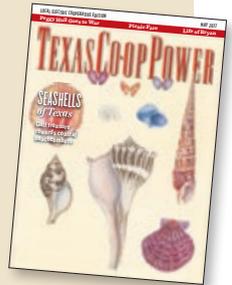


September 17, 1945–February 25, 2017



Win a \$50 Bill Credit!

As you’re reading your *Texas Co-op Power*, look for the “hidden” account number in the local HILCO pages in the center of the magazine. If it’s YOUR electric account number, call us before the end of May—you have won a \$50 credit on your HILCO electric bill!



(254) 687-2331

or

1-800-338-6425



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Power Tip

Dishwasher efficiency tip:

Air-dry clean dishes to save energy. If your dishwasher does not have an automatic air-dry switch, then turn off the dishwasher after the final rinse and prop the door open slightly so the dishes will dry faster.

Are You Safety Savvy?

MAY IS NATIONAL ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH. Take this quiz from the Electrical Safety Foundation International to find out how much you know about electrical safety in your home.

- 1. True or False:** Using a corded telephone during a lightning storm is safe.
a. True b. False
- 2. Why do some outlets have three holes?**
a. To provide more voltage
b. The third prong is the “ground.”
c. To accommodate foreign appliances
d. It keeps the plug from falling out.
- 3. When using a portable generator during a power outage, you should _____ .**
a. connect generators directly to the household wiring only when an appropriate transfer switch is installed to prevent “backfeeding” along power lines, which can pose a risk to utility lineworkers making repairs
b. position the generator outside the house and away from doors, windows or vents that could allow carbon monoxide to enter the home
c. make sure the generator is properly grounded
d. plug it into a ground-fault circuit interrupter
e. All of the above
- 4. The most common scenario for electrocutions while using power tools is _____ .**
a. the equipment coming into contact with water
b. the equipment coming into contact with electrical wires
c. the equipment malfunctioning
d. exposure to bare wires by grabbing a cord with cracked or broken insulation
- 5. Smoke alarm batteries should be changed every:**
a. month b. 6 months
c. year d. 2 years
- 6. You shouldn't swim near docks or marinas because:**
a. Boats may not see you and run you over.
b. There could be lost fishing equipment in the water such as hooks or tangled line.
c. The water might be electrified by docks or boats that leak electricity into the water.
d. All of the above
- 7. In a study conducted by Temple University's Biokinetics Laboratory, what percentage of children 2–4 years old were**



- able to remove the plastic outlet covers from sockets in less than 10 seconds?
- a. 25 percent
 - b. 50 percent
 - c. 75 percent
 - d. 100 percent
- 8. The proper way to safely move away from a downed power line is to _____ until you are 35 feet away.**
a. take small hops with your feet together
b. keep your feet together and on the ground at all times
c. skip so that only one foot is on the ground at a time
d. crawl on all fours
 - 9. True or False:** You can be electrocuted using a tree trimmer near a power line even if you don't touch the wires.
a. True b. False
 - 10. True or False:** Swallowing a button-cell battery can be fatal.
a. True b. False
 - 11. What age group has the highest risk of death from fire?**
a. 15 years and under b. 21–35 years
c. 50–64 years d. Adults over 65
 - 12. Birds are able to perch on power lines without risk of injury because:**
a. Those power lines do not have power running through them at that time.
b. The unique skin on the feet of birds protects them.
c. Sitting on one wire does not provide a ground or connect a circuit, so the current doesn't leave the wire and continues on its path.
d. Birds' bones are hollow, allowing the current to pass through them without harm.

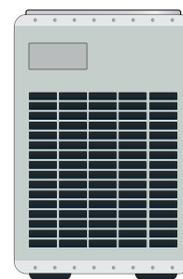
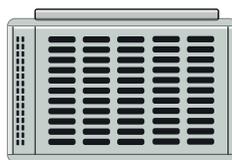
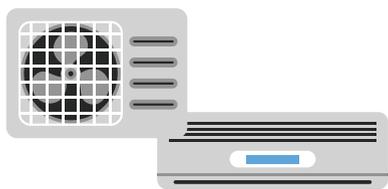
Answers:
(1) b; (2) b; (3) e; (4) b; (5) c; (6) d; (7) d; (8) a; (9) a; (10) a; (11) d; (12) c

PROPERLY SIZING YOUR HVAC UNIT

An improperly sized HVAC unit can wreak havoc on your home. An oversized unit can cause your system to “short cycle”—constantly turning off and on. An undersized unit will run constantly to keep up with demand. Consider the factors below and choose an HVAC system that works best for your home.

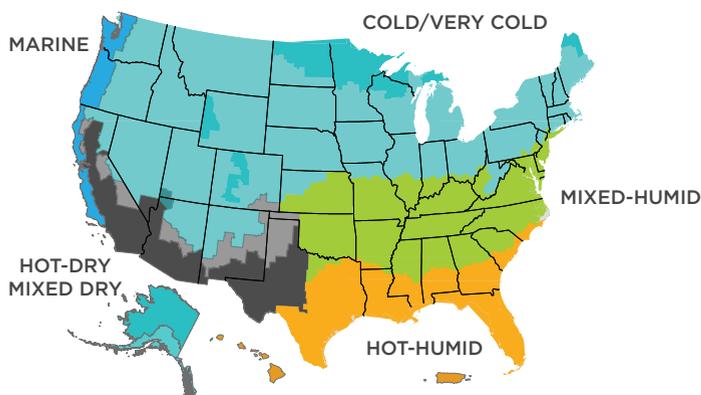
SIZE MATTERS

The square footage of your home can help determine the load capacity of your HVAC unit, but it should not be the only factor considered when reviewing unit sizes. Enlist the help of a licensed professional to determine the best HVAC unit for your home.



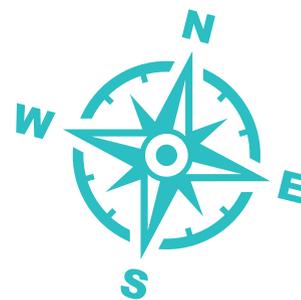
GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

The region in which your home is located will factor into how much capacity you need per square foot.



HOME'S ORIENTATION

How sunlight hits your home during different times of the day impacts the load capacity required to properly heat or cool your home.



INSULATION EFFECTIVENESS

The better insulated your home is, the fewer BTUs (British Thermal Units) per square foot your home will need to stay at the desired temperature.



A reliable energy partner will help you determine how each of these factors affect your system's load capacity. Contact your electric co-op for more information.

Source: Department of Energy

10 Simple Spring Energy Savers

FOLLOW THESE SPRINGTIME TIPS to help save energy and lower your electric bill:

1. Call a qualified technician to service your central air-conditioning system. HVAC equipment needs servicing every year to head off major problems and keep the system running smoothly all summer.
2. As long as the spring weather is mild, open a window instead of turning on the air conditioner. Draw soft spring breezes into the home by turning on your ceiling fans.
3. Cook outside on the grill as soon as the weather permits it. When you don't turn on the cooktop or oven, you don't heat up your house.
4. Close the shades. It's tempting to leave them open on beautiful, sunny spring days. If it's hot outside, that heat can find its way into your house through the win-



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dows and tempt you to crank up the AC unnecessarily.

5. If it's sunny but not hot outdoors, throw those curtains open and let the natural daylight illuminate your home. Then, turn off any lights. You won't need them.

6. Don't have a programmable thermostat yet? It's time. Sometimes spring weather calls for heat, and sometimes you need the AC. A programmable thermostat will help you limit how much energy you use for either by automatically turning the temperature up or down as needed. 120248504

7. Seal the ducts in your central air-conditioning system. Leaky ducts can push your cooling costs up by as much as 30 percent.

8. Likewise, caulk around windows and electrical outlets so cool air can't escape your house and hot air can't get in.

9. Keep your home's humidity levels low by running kitchen and bathroom exhaust

Open the windows for some cool air this spring and keep bills low.

fans—but only until the smoke or steam clears. Running them for too long will suck more than humidity and odors from your home. Those fans can send your comfortable, conditioned air out of the house.

10. Change your AC filter. A clogged filter forces your system to work harder and use more energy. It also can send the dust and allergens it collects right back into your indoor air.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH



HAMIZA BAKIRCI | ISTOCK.COM

Tahitian Salad

- 1 small box (6 ounces) wild rice, cooked per directions
- 1 can (11½ ounces) mixed vegetables, drained
- 1 can (7½ ounces) corn, drained
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 tomato, chopped
- ¼ bell pepper, chopped
- 3 stalks celery, chopped
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
- 1 cup reduced-fat mayonnaise
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- ¼ cup vinegar
- ½ teaspoon garlic salt
- Salt and pepper to taste

1. Mix all ingredients in a large bowl.
2. Cover and chill overnight.

This recipe was a winner in the August 2012 *These Are the Salad Days* recipe contest. Submit your favorite recipe for this month's *Sunday Cooking* contest to *Texas Co-op Power* by May 10 for a chance to win \$100 and have it published. Visit texascooppower.com/contests.

Find this and more delicious recipes online at
TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM

Observe Electrical Safety on the Outside

ELECTRICAL HAZARDS ARE NOT ONLY present indoors but also can occur outside. Follow these guidelines to help prevent common outdoor electrical hazards.

Power Lines

Before planting trees near a power line, do some research or speak with a professional at your cooperative to ensure that there's enough space for them to grow safely. If you suspect that a tree is too close to power lines, report it to your electric co-op.

Electricity can jump to nearby objects! Always keep yourself and any equipment at least 10 feet away from power lines.

Power lines also are found underground. Call 811 before you dig for any project.



Follow the Path to Lighter Lighting

LIGHTING ACCOUNTS FOR MORE than 10 percent of a home's electric bill, but constant developments are making it easier and more economical to illuminate your home. Try any of these updated features to adjust the way you light up your life:

Dimmers

- ▶ Adjust light levels to meet a range of preferences
- ▶ Can extend lightbulb life
LEDs and CFLs need to be labeled as compatible to work with dimmer features.

Remote control or smart panels

- ▶ Offer convenient management from a phone or remote control
- ▶ Some models allow for remote management from anywhere, providing security and peace of mind.
- ▶ Some models save preference profiles that can be preset.

Timers

- ▶ Provide added security while away from home
- ▶ Improve safety for entry after dark
- ▶ Countdown timers prevent leaving lights on accidentally.

Motion sensors

- ▶ Allow for hands-free convenience
- ▶ Provide added security when installed outside
All switches and lighting equipment should bear the mark of a nationally recognized safety testing laboratory, and major upgrades should be handled by a qualified electrician.

Outdoor Outlets

Have ground-fault circuit interrupters installed on outdoor outlets. GFCIs automatically cut power when a plugged-in item comes in contact with water or begins to "leak" electricity.

Install weatherproof boxes or covers on outdoor outlets.

Generators

Of the 931 carbon monoxide fatalities between 1999 and 2012, 79 percent were associated with generators. Twenty-four percent occurred when generators were used inside an attached garage or shed.

When in use, position generators outside and away from doors, windows and vents.



Before planting trees in your yard, speak with a professional to make sure they will have room to grow.

Make sure your home is properly equipped with carbon monoxide alarms and test them monthly.

Make sure your generator is properly grounded. Do not plug it directly into a home outlet without a transfer switch to prevent "backfeeding," which could harm utility lineworkers making repairs.

Extension Cords

Extension cords provide a temporary solution and should not be used long term.

Never use an indoor extension cord outdoors. Outdoor cords will be labeled "for outdoor use" and are often orange.

Never attempt to extend the length of an extension cord by connecting it to another extension cord.

Only use extension cords that bear the mark of a nationally recognized safety testing laboratory such as UL, Intertek or CSA.



SAFE ELECTRICITY.ORG

Always consider safety first and be on the look out for the dangers of storm damage.

Staying Safe After a Storm Has Passed

TEXAS IS PRONE to severe weather. Hurricanes, tornadoes, hail, high winds or flooding can put life, home and property in danger. We tend to breathe a sigh of relief after a storm moves on. However, just because the storm has passed, it does not mean that the danger has. There could be a variety of hazards left behind.

HILCO Electric Cooperative wants you to know how to continue to stay safe after a storm has passed:

- ▶ Do not touch a downed line or something that it has fallen over, like a fence or a tree limb. Doing so could get you injured or killed. A downed power line does not have to be arcing or smoking to be deadly. Stay away and instruct others to do the same. If you come across downed power lines, call 911 and the co-op immediately.

- ▶ Before entering storm-damaged buildings, make sure the electricity and gas are turned off.

- ▶ If you are inspecting your home in the dark, use a flashlight rather than a candle or other open flame to avoid the risk of fire or explosion due to a gas leak.

- ▶ Do not turn power off if you must stand in water to do so.

Call HILCO EC and have power turned off at the meter.

- ▶ If you see frayed wiring or sparks or smell something burning, shut off the electrical system at the main circuit breaker—if you know how and can do so safely.

- ▶ If you smell gas or suspect a leak, get out of the house. Call 911 and notify your gas utility immediately.

- ▶ Do not drive on roads after a storm unless you have to. If you are driving and come upon a downed power line, stay away and warn others to stay away. Contact emergency personnel or the cooperative to address the downed line. If your vehicle comes in contact with a downed power line, do not leave the vehicle. Wait for utility and emergency professionals to make sure the power line is de-energized before exiting.

- ▶ When it comes time to clean up after the storm, do not use water-damaged electronics before properly restoring them. Electric motors in appliances should be cleaned and reconditioned before use. Have water-damaged items inspected and approved by a professional before using them.

Find more information on electrical safety and storms at safeelectricity.org.