

## Four tips for winter safety

It is no surprise that winter months bring increased potential for fire risks and electrical safety hazards. During the coldest months consumers are using additional electrical appliances and devices, such as space heaters, electric blankets, and portable generators.

The National Fire Protection Association estimates that 47,700 home fires occur each year in the U.S. due to electrical failure or malfunction. These fires result in approximately 418 deaths, 1,570 injuries, and \$1.4 billion in property damage annually. This winter, safeguard your loved ones and your home with these electrical safety tips from the Electrical Safety Foundation International.

- 1. Do not overload outlets.** Overloaded outlets are a major cause of residential fires. Avoid using extension cords or multi-outlet converters for appliance connections. Appliances should always be plugged directly into a wall outlet. If you are relying heavily on extension cords you may need additional outlets to address your needs. Contact a qualified electrician to inspect your home and install new outlets.
- 2. Never leave space heaters unattended.** If you are using a space heater, turn it off before leaving the room. Make sure heaters are placed at least three feet away from

flammable items. It should also be noted that space heaters can add a significant toll to your energy bill. If you are using them throughout your home, it may be time to upgrade your home heating system.

- 3. Inspect heating pads and electric blankets.** These items cause nearly 500 fires every year. Electric blankets that are more than 10 years old create additional risks for a fire hazard. Inspect your electric blankets and heating pads; look for dark, charred, or frayed spots, and make sure the electrical cord is not damaged. Do not place any items on top of a heating pad or electric blanket and never fold them when in use.
- 4. Use portable generators safely.** Unfortunately, winter storms can cause prolonged power outages, which means many consumers will use portable generators to power their homes. Never connect a standby generator into your home's electrical system. For portable generators, plug appliances directly into the outlet provided on the generator. Start the generator before you plug in any appliances. Run it in a well-ventilated area outside your home. The carbon monoxide it generates is deadly, so keep it away from your garage, doors, windows, and vents.



## Co-op Connections Program SAVING YOU MONEY!

As a member of Shelby Electric Cooperative (SEC) you belong to a national discount program that works at over 40,000 businesses nationally. This program also has a pharmacy discount, as well as Healthy Savings Benefits, which provide you savings on dental, vision, hearing, chiropractic care, and so much more. As of December 2019, SEC members have saved over **\$127,000** on prescriptions since the card's inception and nationally, cooperative members have saved over **\$125 million**. Visit [connections.coop](http://connections.coop) to see all the new features and programs available or download the app!



### Here is a list of area businesses offering discounts as of December 1, 2019:

#### Bloomington

- **Glass Specialty Company, Inc.** 309-664-1087  
\$20 Wal-Mart gift card with any auto glass replacement.

#### Champaign

- **Glass Specialty Company, Inc.** 352-4258  
\$20 Wal-Mart gift card with any auto glass replacement.
- **TEAM Wireless Verizon** 356-9300  
50% off car cord or leather case when activating a new line or upgrading an existing plan.

#### Decatur

- **Glass Specialty Company, Inc.** 429-2371  
\$20 Wal-Mart gift card with any auto glass replacement.
- **Scotty's Pest Control** 422-9372  
10% discount on all jobs.

#### Findlay

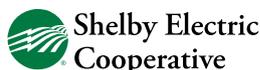
- **Pad-N-Checker Gunstock Service** 738-2298  
\$1.00 off per each \$20.00 spent above the first \$100.00. Card required for discount.



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

**P.O. BOX 560  
Shelbyville, IL 62565  
Phone: 217-774-3986  
or 1-800-677-2612  
Pay-by-Phone:  
1-855-385-9981  
[www.shelbyelectric.coop](http://www.shelbyelectric.coop)  
[twitter.com/YourCoop](https://twitter.com/YourCoop)  
[facebook.com/YourCoop](https://facebook.com/YourCoop)**

**Office Hours:  
7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

#### Forsyth

- **Herzog Quality Optical** 872-7710  
20% off complete pair of prescription glasses, lenses only or Plano sunglasses.  
10% off all other products for sale (purses).

#### Greenville

- **Enertech, Inc.** 618-664-9010  
\$50 per ton equipment discount (max 5 ton) on GeoComfort or Paradise geothermal systems.

#### Mattoon

- **Seal & Save** 273-4638  
\$49 Dryer-Vent Cleanings.
- **TEAM Wireless Verizon** 258-8771  
50% off car cord or leather case when activating a new line or upgrading an existing plan.

#### Oconee

- **Hired Hands Services** 539-4218  
5% off any carpet or resilient flooring.

#### Pana

- **Bland Heating & Air Conditioning** 562-4256  
10% discount on service calls.

#### Pleasant Plains

- **Paul Tree Farms, LLC.** 414-9556  
971-7876  
10% off pines, spruces, maples, and oaks.

#### Shelbyville

- **Best Wedding Chapel** 774-7809  
For any wedding, mention the Co-op Connections Program and receive a free 8x10 Mobile Wedding Chapel poster.
- **Beyers Chiropractic** 774-5313  
10% off vitamins, braces, and pillows.
- **Mid-State Eye** 774-4422  
20% off eyeglasses/sunglasses and 50% off second pair.
- **Carl Grabb Motors** 774-2165  
5% off of labor on automotive repairs. Excludes oil changes.
- **Coon Creek Lodge** 756-3147  
10% discount on kitchenettes.
- **Druby's** 774-5143  
2 free medium drinks w/ purchase of any everyday Family Deal.
- **Grammy's West Side Floral** 774-4644  
10% off, some restrictions apply.
- **Hearing At Home** 824-0411  
10% off hearing aid(s). [hearingathome.net](http://hearingathome.net)
- **Iced** 774-2247  
Free tea or soda with lunch purchase.
- **Just A Stitch** 774-2227  
20% off regular priced merchandise.

- **Leach-Wilson Chevrolet Buick Co.** 774-3975  
5% off parts and labor any day of the week.
- **Merle Norman Cosmetics & Boutique** 774-4233  
Save \$3 on a purchase of \$25 or more (some restrictions may apply).
- **Simply Yours Boutique** 273-5358  
10% off \$10 or more purchase.
- **Studio 1 Twenty 3** 273-5358  
\$10 off room use booking
- **TEAM Wireless Verizon** 774-9559  
50% off car cord or leather case when activating a new line or upgrading an existing plan.
- **Woodpile Primitives** 254-6955  
10% off on any stock item.

#### Sullivan

- **Coyote Cabins** 728-7150  
Regular price is \$125/night, discount price is \$99/night for weekend and \$89 Sunday - Thursday.
- **TEAM Wireless Verizon** 728-2504  
50% off car cord or leather case when activating a new line or upgrading an existing plan.

#### Taylorville

- **A Classic Bouquet** 824-6556  
10% off purchases - cash & carry.
- **Hearing At Home** 824-0411  
10% off hearing aid(s). [hearingathome.net](http://hearingathome.net)
- **Hear Well Hearing Care Centre** 824-5210  
20% off all services.
- **Market Street Inn** 824-7220  
10% off single night stay, 20% off two or more nights stay.
- **ProStitch Auto Interiors & Upholstery, Inc.** 824-3228  
\$10 off any basic headliner replacement or free black vinyl for ag/commercial seat repairs.
- **Taylorville Community Credit Union** 824-9658  
.25% off any new installment loan.
- **The Best 4 Less** 824-4003  
10% off already discounted prices.
- **Yard Heating & Cooling** 824-4737  
10% off on furnace and/or air conditioner checkup.

#### Urbana

- **TEAM Wireless Verizon** 365-9300  
50% off car cord or leather case when activating a new line or upgrading an existing plan.

# REAL LIFE REAL POWER

## Getting Real with Marla and electrical interrupters

**2020** is underway and most homes probably added an electricity-using item or two during the past year. In many homes, the electrical system may not have been designed to handle today's electrical needs. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, half of the occupied homes in the United States were built prior to 1973, before many of the electronics and appliances we use today were even invented.

The addition of Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCIs) and Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) have provided significant safety protection within our homes. The question may be, which one does what?

AFCIs protect against arc faults, a dangerous issue caused by damaged, overheated, or

overloaded electrical wiring or devices that may result in a fire. Electricity is a major cause of home fires. Electrical fires can spread quickly behind walls and in attics causing more damage than other fires. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that AFCIs could prevent 50 percent of electrical fires every year.



GFCIs help prevent electrical burns, shocks, and electrocutions. A person (or pet) that becomes part of the path between a source of power and a grounded surface will get shocked or electrocuted. GFCI outlets are required in areas around water like near a kitchen or bathroom sink or outdoors, but many



older homes do not have these safety measures installed.

Another option, especially convenient for kitchens and laundry circuits, is dual-function circuit breakers. These circuit breakers combine the two technologies (GFCI and AFCI) into one device.

Although it is not nearly as fun as

buying a new large screen television or updating your appliances, making sure your electrical service is updated and safe should not be overlooked. If you have any concerns or questions about your home's electrical service, contact a qualified electrician.

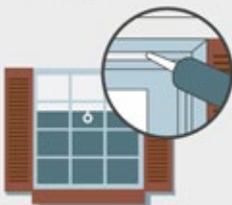
*~Marla Foor,  
Communication Specialist*

*Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International*

## EASY WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY

### WEATHERIZE

Seal doors and windows with caulk, weather stripping, and/or plastic film.



### SEAL IN WARMTH

Close blinds and curtains during the night to keep cold air out. Open them during the day to let sunlight in.



### COOK UP SAVINGS

Use smaller appliances, like microwaves, toaster ovens, and slow cookers when possible.



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Are you using your fireplace efficiently? Remember to turn down the thermostat when burning a fire, and close the damper when a fire is not burning.

*Source: energy.gov*

# Winter weather and your propane tank

Winter can produce some of the most magnificent scenery, but it can also be challenging. Accumulated snow and ice have the potential to damage your propane system. While you can not always predict snowstorms or hazardous weather conditions, you can take measures during and after winter storms.

## Keep snow and ice from accumulating on propane equipment.

Snow or ice accumulation can potentially cause parts of your propane system to crack or break, resulting in a gas leak. It is your responsibility to make sure that all propane pipes, valves, regulators, and tanks are clear of snow and ice. Gently brush away snow or ice that has accumulated around the tank, meter, regulator, and any other piping. Do this using a broom or by hand. If you must use a shovel, use extreme caution around all equipment. If you notice any snow or ice buildup that cannot be removed easily, contact Shelby Energy Company. **DO NOT** attempt to remove snow or ice by kicking or hitting any equipment.

## Be alert to snow buildup on rooftops and other areas.

Frequently check where snow or ice collects on your roof, structure,



*Keeping your propane tank free from snow and ice will allow your propane provider safe and easy access to service your tank.*

or nearby trees, and clear it if you believe it might fall on any part of your propane system. Never shovel snow off of roofs and onto propane equipment. Heavy accumulations of snow or ice falling on tanks, regulators, meters, piping, or valves may cause damage that could result in a gas leak.

## Keep vents clear.

Appliance vents and chimney flues must **ALWAYS** be clear of snow or ice. Some homes may have “direct” vents, which are close to the ground. Improper venting can cause carbon monoxide to

become trapped in your home, resulting in serious illness or even death.

## Clear driveways and pathways to propane tanks.

Please remember that a propane delivery truck needs at least a 10-foot-wide path to be able to deliver fuel to your home. Also, keep the tank area and a path to the tank free of snow. When plowing, snow blowing, or shoveling, do not push or pile snow around your tank, meter, regulator, or piping.

## Talk to your contractors.

If you use a snow removal service, make sure that the service knows the location of all propane equipment on the property. Instruct them to keep their equipment clear of all parts of your propane system. If your snow removal service shovels snow off your roof, instruct them to never shovel snow onto any part of the propane system.

## Propane safety tips



- Handle any propane-powered equipment cautiously and always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Cylinder tanks for equipment such as stoves and ovens must be located outside of the home.
- Never store or use propane gas cylinders larger than one pound inside the home.
- Never operate a propane-powered gas grill inside the home.
- Have propane gas equipment inspected periodically by a professional for possible leaks or malfunctioning parts.
- Carefully follow the manufacturer's instructions when igniting a pilot light.
- If you smell a strong odor of gas, leave the area immediately, call 911 from outside the home, and then call your propane provider.

Shelby Energy Company is an LP gas subsidiary of Shelby Electric Cooperative.

 217-774-2311 |  [shelbyenergyco.coop](http://shelbyenergyco.coop) |  @ShelbyEnergyCo

