

# Coastlines

News and information for Customers of Central Lincoln People's Utility District



December 2008

## Holiday Safety: It's A Priority

*“Never remove the ground pin to make a three-prong plug fit a two-conductor outlet.”*

During the holiday season, we use electricity in a lot of different ways. We may have outdoor or indoor lighting displays, we do a lot of additional cooking and baking, we can have company that uses additional lighting, heating and hot water, and the list goes on and on.

We'd like to remind you to use that electricity safely, not only this holiday season, but year-round, too.

### PLUGS

*Make sure your plugs fit your outlets.*

*Never remove the ground pin (the third prong) to make a three-prong plug fit a two-conductor outlet.*

### OUTLETS

*Avoid overloading outlets with too many appliances. Replace any missing or broken wall plates. Make sure there are safety covers on all unused outlets that are accessible to children.*

### CORDS

*Make sure cords are in good condition -- not frayed or cracked. Cords should never be nailed or stapled to the wall, baseboard or any other object. Do not place electrical cords under carpets or rugs, or set any furniture on them. (Extension cords*

*should **only** be used on a temporary basis; they're not meant to be used as permanent household wiring.)*

### GFCI's

*Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI's) can help prevent electrocution. When a GFCI senses current leakage in an electrical circuit, it interrupts power fast enough to help prevent serious injury from electrical shock. They should be used in any area where water and electricity may come into contact (bathrooms and kitchens, for instance), and they should be tested regularly to make sure they're working properly.*

### CIRCUIT BREAKERS/FUSES

*Circuit breakers and fuses should be the correct current rating for their circuit. Always replace burned-out fuses with the correct fuse size.*

### SPACE HEATERS

*Space heaters are meant to provide supplemental heat, and should not be used as a main heating source. Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from any combustible material such as bedding, clothing, draperies, furniture and rugs. Don't use them in rooms where children are unsupervised, and remember to turn them off **and** unplug them when they're not in use.*

### OUTDOOR SAFETY

*Electric power tools should not be used in the rain, on wet ground, or in other wet conditions. Inspect power tools and electric mowers for frayed power cords, broken plugs, and cracked or broken housings. If it's damaged, repair it or replace it. Always use*

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*“Never place a halogen floor lamp where it could come in contact with draperies, clothing, etc.”*

*an extension cord that's marked for outdoor use, and rated for the power needs of the tools you're using. And remember to avoid all overhead and underground power lines.*

**LIGHT BULBS**

*Make sure bulbs are the correct wattage for the fixture they're used in. Make sure all bulbs are screwed in securely. Loose bulbs may overheat.*

**HALOGEN FLOOR LAMPS**

*Halogen floor lamps operate at much higher temperatures than standard incandescent light bulbs. Never place a halogen floor lamp where it could come in contact with draperies, clothing or any other combustible materials. Be sure to turn the lamp off whenever you leave the room for an extended period of time, and never use halogen torchiere lamps in children's bedrooms*

*or playrooms.*

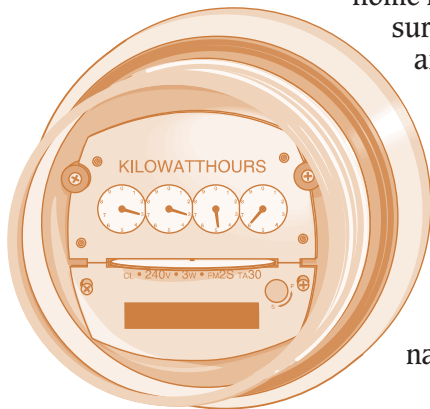
**LIGHTNING**

*During an electrical storm, don't use appliances like hair-dryers, toasters, washing machines, or others that require a lot of physical contact. Use telephones only in an emergency. Lightning can travel right down the phone line. Don't take a bath or shower when there's lightning. Use surge protection devices to prevent damage to your electrical appliances.*

**WATER AND ELECTRICITY DON'T MIX**

*Don't leave plugged-in appliances where they might come into contact with water. If a plugged-in appliance falls into water, **NEVER** reach in to pull it out, even if it's turned off. First turn off the power supply to that appliance at the breaker box, and **then** unplug the appliance.*

## "Standby" Power Usage Is Costing You Money



Imagine that you're planning to leave home for a few days. You make sure that your television, VCR, and stereo system are turned off. You do the same for all your other electronic equipment, lock your doors, and leave.

That means that those appliances won't be using electricity while you're gone, right? Unfortunately, the answer is no.

In fact, those appliances are not really turned off, they're just in "standby" mode. The only way to really turn them off is to unplug them.

"Standby" mode lets those appliances respond faster when you turn them on. It's simply a matter of manufacturers giving customers the "instant on" that we all want in this hurried world. But there's a price to pay.

Most of these home appliances can use the energy equivalent of a 15- or 20-watt

lightbulb. And that's 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for as long as they're plugged in. It may not seem like a lot, but if you've got a lot of different appliances, it adds up quickly.

In fact, of the total power these appliances use during the month, anywhere from 93% to 98% is used while they're turned off! On average, American residences spend about 6% of their total electricity bill on inactive appliances.

The types of appliances that use standby energy are home entertainment systems, home office systems, answering machines, cordless phones, microwave ovens, garage door openers, and many more.

The government doesn't require "standby" power usage to be listed, but if you do a little digging, you can find appliances that are much more efficient. One place to find more information is [www.standby.lbl.gov/CEC\\_Workshop](http://www.standby.lbl.gov/CEC_Workshop). It's the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory "standby" power site, and it will give you lots of money-saving information.



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