

# KEEPING YOU & YOUR FAMILY SAFE

**OG&E**<sup>®</sup>

## **A guide to staying safe at work, at home, at the wheel and at play.**

Imagine life without electricity. No lights, no computers, no television. Because electricity is a major part of our lives, it can easily be taken for granted. And that's when electricity can be dangerous – even deadly.

This brochure is designed to help you and your family avoid potentially hazardous situations. Take time now to read it, and share the information with family members. Keep the brochure handy for future reference. It contains helpful tips from your friends at OG&E. If you have questions, call Customer Service at 800-272-9741. For local code requirements, check with a licensed electrician. And learn what you need to know to live safely.

### **Child-Related Safety Tips**

#### **Indoors:**

- Keep appliance and extension cords out of reach. Replace old or frayed cords with new ones.
- Teach children the correct way to unplug electric cords: pull the plug, not the cord.
- Teach children never to use appliances near water. And never leave an appliance where it could fall, or be pulled, into water.
- Never put your finger or a metal utensil inside the toaster or other appliances.
- Teach older children to use appliances – including ranges and microwave ovens – safely.
- Put plastic plug covers over outlets.
- Lower the temperature on your water heater to 120° to decrease the risk of scalding.
- Babysitters should know about electrical safety before you leave the house.

#### **Outdoors:**

- Never play around or climb on substations, transformers, power poles or towers. Learn to recognize and respect “Danger – High Voltage” signs.
- Kids should stay away from neighborhood transformers which are mounted in green metal boxes. Report unlocked cabinets to OG&E at 800-272-9741.
- Check trees in your yard for proximity to power lines. Children should not climb on trees underneath or touching power lines.

- Never use metallic cloth, wire or tinsel on kites. Use dry string only. And never fly a kite when it's raining — kites conduct electricity.
- Fly kites in areas away from power lines, trees and roads.
- Don't try to retrieve kites, balloons or model airplanes from power lines.
- Don't release metallic (mylar) helium balloons. If caught in power lines, they could cause outages and fires.
- Stay indoors during thunderstorms.
- Never let kids tamper with or play on electrical boxes, power poles and electrical line structures or around substations.

## **Appliance Safety**

- Check appliance cords often for cracks and signs of wear. Replace when necessary.
- Don't overload outlets.
- Keep appliances away from water.
- Keep cords away from hot surfaces.
- Plug cord first into the appliance and then into the wall.
- If an appliance falls into water, unplug it from the wall before retrieving.
- Unplug an appliance if it catches fire. Don't throw water on the fire — the electrical current could travel through the water.
- Shut off power at circuit breaker or fuse box if smoke comes out of outlet.
- Unplug appliances before you work on them (even when changing light bulbs).
- Don't poke metal objects inside electric appliances.
- If you receive any kind of shock from an appliance, have the appliance checked by an electrician.
- Discard or replace an appliance if it emits smoke, sparks or light.
- Unplug appliances when not in use.
- Never vacuum wet carpet.

## **Outdoors & Around the House**

- When landscaping or doing construction work, find out where it's safe to dig to avoid serious injury and/or outages. Before you dig, call call OKIE at 811 or 1-800-522-6543 (outside of Oklahoma).
- If you live in an area that has underground electric service, you may have noticed green metal boxes in your neighborhood. These locked boxes are called padmounted transformers, and contain important electrical equipment that should not be tampered with. If you have a transformer box on your property and plan to obscure it with lawn decorations or shrubs, please provide an open area of about 10 feet from the transformer door. This enables OG&E crews easy access to the equipment, especially during outages.
- Stay at least 10 feet away from power lines. Any type of ladder can conduct electricity. If possible, pick a calm, windless day to minimize the risk of falling against energized electrical lines.

- Never use a metal ladder near power lines.
- Watch for power lines and don't risk contact using ladders, scaffolds, antennas, pool skimming rods, tree trimming equipment, long-handled paint rollers, irrigation pipes or anything else that might conduct electricity.
- Place ladder on the opposite side of the roof from where the electric service wires connect to your house.
- Install rooftop antennas where they will not fall on or touch electric lines (approximately 2 times the antenna's total length from the line).
- Check trees or shrubs for electric wires before trimming.
- Be sure fixtures and light bulbs used outside are approved for outdoor use.
- Allow at least 10 feet between a plant and an underground power line.
- Use an electric lawn mower on dry grass only. Always wear shoes.
- Never do your own electrical repairs. Call a professional.
- Here's a reminder that when working on projects outside, stay 10-20 feet away (the further the better) from overhead power lines while handling ladders, pole extended chain saws or equipment that could inadvertently touch the lines.
- Don't make direct contact with the victim.
- Shut off power at its source (fuse box or circuit breaker panel).
- Call 911 and begin CPR.
- If you must make contact with the victim before the power source is shut off, do so with a non-conductive material such as rubber, plastic or glass. Do not stand on a wet surface. Have dry hands.

## Downed Power Lines

- Fallen power lines often result from storms, fires and vehicle accidents.
- Stay away from power lines — do not touch.
- Downed power lines may appear to be harmless, but could be live. They don't necessarily make cracking sounds.
- If a person or object is in contact with a power line, don't touch the person, object or line. The electric current could flow through you. Call 911 and OG&E immediately.
- If your vehicle accidentally hits a pole and the power line falls across your car, stay inside the car. Warn others not to touch the car or power line.
- If you must leave the car, jump clear to avoid being in contact with the car and the ground at the same time, and then roll away from the car.

## Indoor Safety

- Light bulbs should be the right wattage to avoid overheating. If unsure, don't use a bulb over 60 watts.
- Outlets should have safety covers. If an outlet feels warm to the touch, call an electrician.

## **Extension Cords**

- Check amp rating. The appliance should not exceed the rating.
- Check cords for frays, cracks and damaged plugs.
- Use only as a temporary connection.
- Don't run cords across areas with heavy foot traffic or near water.
- Place extension cords away from heat sources and bulbs. Never use them under rugs or through windows where they might be pinched and become worn.
- Don't attach cords with nails or staples.
- Use heavy-duty, grounded, three-pronged cords when using power tools.

## **Power Tools**

- Get training before you use power tools.
- Read manual before using.
- Inspect before each use.
- Check screws, nuts and bolts to make sure they are tightened.
- Work area should be clean and dry.
- Wear protective equipment.
- Don't wear loose clothing or jewelry while operating power tools.
- Have a ground fault circuit interrupter installed to help avoid electrical shock.
- Make sure power tools are turned OFF before they are plugged in or unplugged.
- Don't use power tools outside if it's raining or if the ground is wet.
- When working on a ladder or scaffold, avoid injuries by making sure tools are secure and don't fall.
- Follow manufacturers' recommendations for maintaining power tools.
- Unplug before repairs.

## **Boating, Water and Pool Safety**

- Never touch electric switches or wires when you're wet.
- Look for overhead power lines near boat docks and piers. They are often uninsulated.
- Remove or lower metal equipment (such as the mast) that could contact power lines when transporting boats.
- Look for overhead lines before casting a fishing rod.
- Pools should not be constructed or placed over underground lines.
- Locate pools away from power lines – at least 27 feet in any direction.
- Do not have any electrical wiring, fixtures or receptacles within 20 feet of a single family residential pool.
- All outlets with ground level outdoor access should be ground fault circuit interrupter rated.
- Have a 19-foot minimum clearance in any direction between power lines and diving boards, decks, and platforms.

## Portable Space Heaters

- Be sure home wiring can handle a space heater. If in doubt, call an electrician.
- Look for the UL label. It shows the space heater meets safety standards.
- Read manufacturer's instructions before using a space heater.
- Make sure it has an automatic switch that turns OFF the electric current if the unit is tipped over.
- Check for reliable thermostat controls.
- Keep space heaters at a distance from drapes, furniture or anything that could catch fire.
- Don't use space heaters in bathrooms, and keep them as far away from water as possible.
- Place heaters on floor only — never on counters or furniture.
- Don't use an extension cord unless it's a heavy-duty cord rated to handle the power your space heater requires.
- Never touch a space heater when you're wet.
- Stop using your space heater if the cord becomes hot.
- Unplug your space heater when you're not using it, are asleep or not at home.
- Keep children away from space heaters.

## Holiday Safety

- Don't overload circuits, outlets or extension cords.
- Check lights (new and old) for broken, cracked sockets and loose connections.
- Use only indoor and outdoor lights that have the UL (safety approved) label.
- Don't use outdoor lights indoors. They usually burn hotter than indoor lights.
- Keep cords away from metal objects and out of water.
- Don't connect lights while adjusting them on the tree.
- Unplug lights when changing bulbs.
- Don't let bulbs touch flammable material, including needles, branches and other decorations.
- Illuminate a metal tree with a spotlight. Never use regular lights — danger of shock is too great.
- Artificial trees should have a "flame resistant" label.
- Warn children never to touch tree lights or electric toys with wet hands.
- Make sure the tree is watered every day to avoid risk of fire.
- Unplug lights before leaving home or going to sleep.
- Don't use indoor lights outdoors. They are not waterproof.
- When stringing outdoor lights, use a dry wooden ladder and stay away from overhead power lines.

## **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters**

- Ground fault circuit interrupters monitor the flow of electricity. When problems are detected, circuit interrupters cut off the power in a fraction of a second.
- Ground fault circuit interrupters can be installed either at the outlet or the main electrical box.
- Use ground fault circuit interrupters with outdoor outlets and with power tools. Use especially in pool areas or any other “wet” area around the house (like the bathroom and kitchen) to protect against electric shock.

## **Vandalism**

Shooting at electrical equipment — including power line insulators and utility poles — is vandalism and punishable by fines and/or jail. Power outages can result, endangering people who depend upon electricity for health care or life support.

## **Portable Generators**

Improper use of portable electric generators can cause severe injuries to users and utility crews that may be working on nearby power lines. If not used properly, portable generators can also start fires and damage household appliances.

If you plan to use a portable generator, carefully follow the owner’s manual for proper usage.