

Electrical Safety During Storm Season

June is National Safety Month

Try as we might, weather patterns are often unpredictable. This is especially true during severe storm season when high winds and rain can change in a matter of minutes. Follow these Do's and Don'ts for electrical safety this season:

Do's:

- Watch the weather and know when bad weather is on its way.
- Install surge protectors or unplug your electronics and expensive appliances to protect your equipment from damage due to power surges.
- Know the location of your electrical circuit box and how to turn the power on and off.
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors shut in case your power goes out.
- Keep an emergency kit handy, and make sure it includes bottled water, a small supply of food, a flashlight, extra batteries and a battery-powered radio.
- Charge any mobile devices, laptops or tablets, to have them on standby.
- If your home loses power, check to see if you have a blown fuse or a tripped circuit breaker before calling your local electric utility.
- Leave a few lights on so you'll know when your power is restored.

Don'ts:

- Don't enter a basement that has standing water unless you're certain the power has been shut off.
- Do not connect a generator to your home's electrical system. Consult a licensed electrician.
- Never leave candles burning unattended during a power outage and keep away from flammable objects.

Tree Branches and Power Lines

Nebraska's high winds are known for snapping large tree branches from their trunks and leaving them littered across the city. If a tree branch touches a high-voltage power line, electricity from the line can spark fires and damage nearby property. If you see a branch that has fallen into a power line, stay away and call Hastings Utilities at 402-463-1371.

Fallen Power Lines

Severe storms can damage power poles and lines, and downed power lines should never be touched. Follow these guidelines, and always assume that a fallen power line is live:

- Avoid touching the downed line with your hand or an object, such as a stick, broom or pole.

- Avoid touching anything, such as a car, object or equipment, or anyone who is in contact with a fallen power line.
- Keep children and pets away from fallen electric lines.
- Avoid driving over a fallen power line.
- Hastings Utilities at 402-463-1371 to report a fallen power line.

Continued Monitoring of COVID-19

As COVID-19 restrictions continue to be lifted in our area, Hastings Utilities is monitoring the lingering effects. If you're having trouble paying your utility bill, please reach out at 402-463-1371 to work out a payment plan.