

How to keep food safe when the power is out

Wind, lightning and even squirrels can cause a power outage. We know outages of any length are frustrating, especially when your fridge is stocked.

Here are safety tips to keep in mind.

Before an outage

Keep an emergency supply kit on hand. Be sure to include nonperishable food items like bottled water, powdered milk, canned goods, cereal and protein bars.

If you have advance warning an outage is possible, fill a cooler with ice — just in case the outage spans several hours.

During an outage

If an outage occurs, do not open the refrigerator or freezer unless absolutely necessary. An unopened refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours. A half-full freezer will keep food frozen for about 24 hours and a full freezer for about 48 hours. If it looks like the power outage will last longer than four hours, move perishable items to ice-filled cooler.

After an outage

If refrigerated foods have been exposed to temperatures higher than 40 degrees for more than two hours, the American Red Cross recommends discarding them.

While most perishable foods should be thrown out, there are items safe to eat after a two-hour exposure to 40+ degrees:

- Hard cheeses properly wrapped;
- Butter/margarine properly wrapped;
- Taco, BBQ and soy sauces, peanut butter, jelly, mustard, ketchup and relish.

Always smell and inspect foods before consuming. When in doubt, throw it out.

To learn more about food safety after an emergency, visit www.ready.gov/food.

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Notably, this score is five points above the co-op's 2021 score. The survey is typically conducted every two years.

"We believe it's important to know what our members think about us and how we can improve," said Chief Public Relations Officer Derick Thomas. "They are who we work for, and our mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity with excellent customer service."

Clay Electric's overall satisfaction score by respondents was **8.95**. The previous score was **8.49**.

The level of member satisfaction with service activity performance was highest for the following activities:

- **Having competent and knowledgeable employees: 9.02**
- **Restoring electric service: 8.95**
- **Providing reliable energy: 8.92**
- **Being committed to the community: 8.90**

"They are pretty much on top of everything," writes a surveyed Gainesville member. "When the power is out, a notification is sent for the area. They are very good about responding, and their people are some of the nicest, and very professional."

"Our service has been maintained with great efficiency over a period of nearly 40 years," writes a surveyed Orange Park member. "Even during loss of power resulting from weather emergencies, we have been fully restored within a reasonable time."

The year 2021 was the first time the survey was held completely online. Surveys by telephone were conducted in 2014, 2015 and 2016. In 2018, they were conducted both online and by telephone.

The Clay Electric Cooperative, Inc. _____

Power Line

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Members praise Clay Electric employees & service in survey

Clay Electric's members are, overall, very satisfied with the cooperative's services and programs, a recent online survey reveals.

In June, members were randomly selected to receive the survey from an independent market research organization. They were able to evaluate their experience with the co-op from 1-10 in a number of areas, provide comments and request a follow-up on a question or concern.

The survey is helpful for two key reasons:

1. **It allows us to measure member satisfaction and engagement, which are important focuses of the co-op.**
2. **Enhancing member satisfaction and engagement helps us to perfect our services we provide.**

The research organization uses the widely-recognized American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) as its measuring stick to calculate results. Clay Electric's score on the index was 87, which is above the electric utility industry average and ranks higher than other cooperatives', municipal utilities' and investor-owned utilities' scores nationwide.

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Report from the manager

Ricky Davis

General Manager/CEO



We're staying alert to cyber threats. Are you?

The importance of safety is something I can't stress enough at Clay Electric. It's vital for our line workers to constantly practice safety measures they've learned in training on a daily basis, and that's especially true when they're dispatched to restore power amid the threat of severe weather, when the risk of an accident intensifies.

While we strive to put an emphasis on physical safety at Clay Electric, the same can be said for our cybersecurity efforts amid the constant threat that comes from bad actors on the ever-expanding internet. I bring this up now in a timely manner, as recently, your Cooperative detected one of those bad actors who attempted to impersonate an employee of Clay Electric, contacting a developer and presenting them with fraudulent invoices.

I say all of this to remind you: We're doing our part to protect ourselves at the Cooperative from scammers, and as October marks Cybersecurity Awareness Month, it's equally timely for your co-op to encourage you to do the same at home as every day, millions of Americans are targeted.

Here are four helpful tips:

Enable multi-factor authentication

Also known as two-step verification, multi-factor authentication adds a second step when logging into an account (to prove you're really you), which greatly increases the security of the account. This additional step makes it twice as hard for cyber criminals to

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access your account. Not every account offers multi-factor authentication, but it's becoming increasingly popular and should be utilized when available.

Use strong passwords, a password manager

Your passwords should always be long, unique and complex. Create passwords using at least 12 characters, never reuse passwords for multiple accounts and use a combination of upper- and lower-case letters, numbers and special characters. If you have a lot of accounts, consider using a password manager to store them easily and securely in one place.

Update software

Regularly updating software is one of the easiest ways to keep your personal information secure. Most companies provide automatic updates and will send reminders so you can easily install the update. If you're not receiving automatic software updates, set a reminder to do so quarterly. Be aware that some cyber criminals will send fake updates; these typically appear as a pop-up window when visiting a website, so use good judgement.

Recognize and report phishing attacks

Don't take the bait when cyber criminals go phishing. The signs of a phishing attack can be subtle, so take the extra time to thoroughly inspect emails. Most phishing emails include offers that are too good to be true, an urgent or alarming tone, misspellings and poorly-crafted language, ambiguous greetings, strange requests or an email address that doesn't match the company it's coming from. Most platforms like Outlook, Gmail and Apple Mail allow users to report phishing emails. If you suspect a phishing attempt, take an extra minute to report it.

Scam tactics targeted at our members also include the "overpayment trick," where a scammer contacts someone by phone and claims they've overpaid on their utility bill, asking for personal information to deposit the credit back into their bank account.

Don't fall for it, and if you're ever unsure about anything, simply hang up and call us directly at 1-800-224-4917.

Please make room for roadside crews

When the power goes out, so do Clay Electric's line crews. Lineworkers are the first to respond after an outage occurs, and they work tirelessly to restore power.

If you're traveling and see one of our crews on the side of the road, we ask that you move over, if possible, and give them a little extra space to work. We care about the safety of all, and this extra precaution ensures just that.

In 2014, utility crews became protected by the Florida Move Over Act. Under the law, drivers are required to:

- Approach law enforcement patrol cars, emergency vehicles, utility service vehicles, sanitation vehicles and tow trucks/wreckers with caution and move over a lane.
- If you can't move over — or when on a two-lane road — slow to a speed that is 20 mph less than the posted speed limit.
- Slow down to 5 mph when the posted speed limit is 20 mph or less.

