



Flooded areas and downed power lines can create hidden dangers. Stay away from downed power lines.

Electrical Safety During and After Storms

Answers to frequently asked questions

Severe storms and natural disasters can cause a variety of electrical safety hazards in and around our homes. Lightning, downed power lines and floods are just a few of the serious safety concerns associated with storms.

Unfortunately, many of these electrical safety hazards remain long after the storm itself has passed.

To help protect you from storm-related electrical hazards, the Electrical Safety Foundation International and Graham County Electric Cooperative offer answers to common storm safety questions.

Lightning

What should I do if I am caught outside during a lightning storm?

Move to a low point. Lightning hits the tallest available object, so get down low in a crouched position if you are in an exposed area. Stay away from trees. Avoid metal. Don't hold onto metal items like bats, golf clubs, fishing rods, tennis rackets or tools. Stay away from metal sheds, clothes lines, poles and fences.

Stay away from water, including pools, lakes, puddles and anything damp—like grass.

Don't stand close to other people. Spread out.

Is there any sort of warning before lightning strikes?

Not necessarily, but sometimes. If you feel a tingling sensation or your hair stands on end, lightning may be about to strike. Do not lie down. Instead, crouch down, tuck your head and cover your ears.

What should I do if I encounter a lightning storm while driving in my car?

Slow down and use extra caution. If possible, pull off the road into a safe area.

Am I safer in or out of my car?

Do not leave your vehicle during a thunderstorm. A vehicle is considered safe during a thunderstorm if it is

fully enclosed with a metal top such as a hard-topped car, minivan, bus or truck. While inside a safe vehicle, do not use electronic devices, such as radio communications.

The storm is still raging outside. Are we safe from lightning if we stay inside the house?

To avoid lightning strikes while indoors, stay away from windows and doors.

If possible, unplug electronic equipment before the storm arrives. Avoid contact with electrical equipment and cords during storms.

Avoid contact with water and plumbing, including sinks, baths and faucets.

Can I talk on the telephone during an electrical storm?

Use corded telephones only for emergencies. You can use cordless or cellular phones.

I have an outside dog. Is it OK to leave him outside during a lightning storm?

Doghouses are not lightning-safe, and chained animals can easily become victims of lightning strikes. You should bring your pets inside to protect them.

Power Lines

What should I do if I encounter a downed power line?

If you see a downed power line, move at least 10 feet away from the line and anything touching it. The human body is a ready conductor of electricity.

The proper way to move away from the line is to shuffle away with small steps, keeping your feet together and on the ground at all times. This will minimize the potential for a strong electric shock. Electricity wants to move from a high-voltage zone to a low-voltage zone—and it could do that through your body.

What can I do to help someone who has come in contact with a downed power line?

If you see someone who is in direct or indirect contact with the downed line, do not touch the person. You could become the next victim. Call 911 instead.

Can I use something that is not metal to try to move a downed power line myself?

Do not attempt to move a downed power line or anything in contact with the line by using another object, such as a broom or stick. Even non-conductive materials such as wood or cloth, if slightly wet, can conduct electricity and electrocute you.

What should I do if I see a downed power line in the street while I am driving my car?

Do not drive over downed power lines. Call 911.

What if a power line comes down onto my car or I didn't see it until I've driven into it?

If you are in your car and it is in contact with the downed line, stay in your car. Tell others to stay away from your vehicle.

If you must leave your car because it is on fire, jump out of the vehicle with both feet together and avoid contact with the car and the ground at the same time. This way you avoid being the path of electricity from the car to the earth. Shuffle away from the car.

Is a downed power line still dangerous if it has come down in water, like a pool or pond?

Water is a conductor of electricity. Any amount of water—even a puddle—could become energized. Be careful not to touch water—or anything in contact with the water—near where there is a downed power line.

Flooded Areas

My basement has flooded and there is standing water. Is it safe to go down there?

Use extreme care when stepping into flooded areas. Submerged outlets or electrical cords can energize water, posing a lethal trap.

My washer, dryer and a few other appliances got really wet during the flood. Can I start using them again after they dry out?

Do not use electrical appliances that have been wet until they have been examined by a qualified service repair dealer. Electrical equipment exposed to water can be extremely dangerous if re-energized without proper reconditioning or replacement.

Does a flood affect my home's electrical system, too, or just the appliances?

Electrical items such as circuit breakers, fuses, ground-fault circuit interrupters, receptacles, plugs and switches can malfunction when water and silt get inside. Discard them if they have been submerged. Have a licensed, qualified professional replace them.

Does it make a difference if the flood was caused by stormwater or by a leaky water pipe?

Damage to electrical equipment can result from exposure to floodwaters contaminated with chemicals, sewage, oil and other debris.

No matter what caused the flood, electrical appliances should be examined by a qualified service repair dealer

before being re-energized.

Electrical items that were submerged should be discarded and replaced by a licensed, qualified professional.

Can flooded outside areas be dangerous too?

Yes. Downed power lines or submerged outlets from adjacent homes could energize the water. Use extreme caution when entering any flooded area.

Post-Evacuation

The storm is finally over. Can I go home now?

First and foremost, do NOT return home until instructed by the appropriate local authorities.

Once they give the go-ahead:

- Return home during daylight hours, especially if power has not been restored.
- If you smell gas, leave the premises and notify emergency authorities immediately. Do not turn on lights, light matches or engage in any activity that could create a spark.

I've been told by my local authorities that I can return home now, but could there still be electrical dangers in and around my home?

Yes. Even if you have been authorized to return home, you should take precautions to protect yourself from electrical hazards posed by downed power lines, flooded areas, and water-damaged appliances and electrical equipment. ■



Ladders and power lines do not mix. Look up and around before any outdoor project. Note all of the potential safety hazards.

Stay Safe Exploring the Great Outdoors This Summer

By Abby Berry

Summer is in full swing, and that means it is time for fun in the sun. As you find yourself spending more time outdoors, Graham County Electric Co-op and Graham County Utilities reminds you to stay safe.

Planning a home improvement project? When working outdoors, you may be using tools, such as ladders, power tools, shovels and paintbrushes with extendable arms. These items help you get the job done, but have the potential to be dangerous if used improperly.

Pay attention to where you place metal ladders or dig for fence posts. Before you start any project, always look up and avoid overhead power lines. Keep a minimum of 10 feet between you and overhead lines.

If you are planning a project that requires digging, remember to dial 811 first to find out if the area you will be working in is clear of underground power lines. Power tools should be kept away from wet surfaces, and outlets

should not be overloaded.

Exploring the great outdoors is a great way to spend time with the family, but keep these safety tips in mind.

- Children should never climb trees near power lines. Always assume a wire is live. Fly kites and remote-controlled airplanes in large, open areas such as a park or a field, safely away from trees and overhead power lines.

- Planning to take a dip in the pool? Electrical devices such as stereos should be kept at least 10 feet away from water sources. Outdoor electrical outlets should always be covered. If you hear a rumble of thunder, exit the pool right away.

- Speaking of thunder, summer storms can be dangerous if you are caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. If you find yourself outdoors during a storm, move toward suitable shelter with covered sides, and stick to low-lying ground, if possible.

These are just a few tips to remember when spending time outdoors this summer with your family. Have some fun out there, but always keep safety in mind. ■

Scholarship Winners

The following students earned scholarships from Graham County Electric Cooperative. Look for more on the winners in the September issue.

Brittany Carrizoza

Ft. Thomas High School

Devon Cobb

Ft. Thomas High School

Austin Montano

Mt. Graham High School

Kasiah Montano

Mt. Graham High School

Brynn Pritchard

Pima High School

Sydney Fite

Safford High School

Bryanah Cervantez

Thatcher High School

Madison Michaels

Willcox High School

Artist and Writer Got Her Start in Safford

Her artwork hangs in many area LDS church facilities

By Diane Junion

Peggy Hancock Black Curtis Esplin, 89, has been drawing since she was a child. She is known for her detailed pencil drawings.

Formerly of Safford, she now lives in Orderville, Utah.

Peggy was a waitress at the Star Café when she was 14, and later at the Tiki.

In between customers, Peggy painted a Christ mural on a large mirror on the wall by the booths in the cafe.

One day, a friend showed her a postage-stamp size photo with the face of tribal leader Chee Dodge. It intrigued Peggy so much she went home and produced a larger pencil sketch of the Navajo leader.

“There is just something about the Native American heritage that I love,” she says.

Chee was the great Navajo leader after Manuelto, and the first of a series of chairmen of the Navajo Tribal Council, started on July 7, 1923.

Peggy is well known in the Gila Valley for her pencil depictions, paintings and handmade molded porcelain dolls. Her daughter, Charlotte Alexander, recalls relatives telling her that at an early age, Peggy would sit in the bathroom and draw pictures of Jesus.

Perhaps Peggy’s most

notable drawing is of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 12th President, Spencer W. Kimball, surrounded by Native Americans. The picture was on display at the viewing of Spencer after he died. There is also a large wall painting of Jesus surrounded by children, displayed in the Solomonville LDS church foyer. Numerous other paintings and sketches can be found in the Pima church and throughout bishopric offices in the Gila Valley.

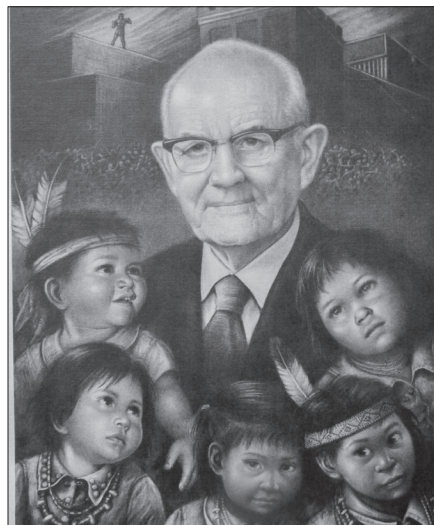
Charlotte loves that her mom produces many fine details in her sketches, such as the tiny aging wrinkles in faces of the people. The drawing of Chee is her favorite.

Peggy is also an accomplished book illustrator and writer. She illustrated more than 50 paintings for “Pee Wee Saves Christmas” and wrote “But Mama ... What About Jesus?” which was published in late 2016 and was inspired by her little brother. Peggy wanted to provide people with a Christmas message and have them understand more about Christmas, especially children.

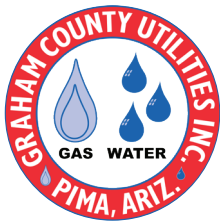
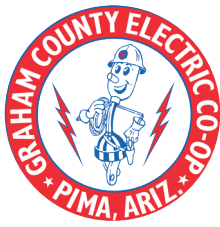
As often as she can, Peggy comes back to the Gila Valley, to continue making memories and staying close to those she loves. ■



Above, Peggy Hancock Black Curtis Esplin developed a love for Native American culture.



Left, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 12th President, Spencer W. Kimball, surrounded by Native Americans.



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Manager's Message

Storm Season Tips

Another year has rolled by, and once again we are in the middle of our summer thunderstorm season. I would like to remind our members of things they should do to prepare for storm-related outages.

It is a good idea to have a storm emergency kit available for use during extended outages. First, make sure you have drinking water available, at least 1 gallon per person per day. During extended outages, water pressures can be affected. Make sure you have some nonperishable food that is easy to prepare. Make sure you have flashlights and extra batteries and/or candles. It is a good idea to have a fully stocked first-aid kit available. Keep several days' worth of prescription medications on hand because your local pharmacy may also be affected by the outage. Have sanitation and personal hygiene items on hand. It is a good idea to have a cellphone and a battery-operated cellphone charger available. If possible, keep extra cash on hand, because your local ATM may be in the outage area.

Under all circumstances, stay away from downed wires or electric equipment. Do not attempt to remove trees or debris you see in power lines or communications lines. If you happen to be in a vehicle that is in or near downed power lines, do not get out of your vehicle. Remain in the vehicle until emergency response personnel or cooperative personnel let you know that is safe to exit the vehicle.

Do not use a generator in an enclosed area such as your home or garage because of the



danger of carbon monoxide poisoning.

We have recently upgraded our telephone system. Our phone system is now able to handle the volume of incoming calls during a large outage. In a large-scale outage, please be patient while waiting to talk to dispatch personnel. Although our system should handle the call volume, the wait times may be substantial. Please listen to the voice prompts as some of the options might have changed. We encourage you to follow us on Facebook for the latest updates on outage restoration. If you have an

emergency or have some information that will help our crews identify the possible cause of the outage, please call us. We will continually update our Facebook page with pertinent information until the power is restored. By following us on Facebook, this keeps our phone system available for emergency situations, such as gas or water outages and additional electric outages.

These are just a few reminders and suggestions to help make outages a little more bearable. Be assured that our line crews and dispatch personnel work tirelessly to get as many members' power back on as soon as possible. Our primary concern during storm season is the safety of our crews, the safety of the general public and the safety of you, our members.

—Kirk Gray