



# Electricity

## FOCUS ON SAFETY

Spring 2024



## Be safe around electricity—indoors and out

We rely on electricity for everything—from lighting and cooling our homes to powering electronics and appliances. While it's easy to take the convenience of electricity for granted, keep in mind it also can be dangerous.

Electricity seeks every available path to the ground through conductors. Good conductors include metal, wet wood and water. Your body is 70% water, making it a very good conductor of current. So, if you're grounded and touching a bare energized wire or faulty appliance, electricity will pass through you to the ground. A small amount of current can be fatal. Electric shock also can cause serious falls, burns, cuts or internal bleeding.

While most electric safety rules are common sense, it's easy to get careless—especially if you're in a hurry.

Take a few minutes to review these safety tips with your family.

### Indoors

- Don't touch appliances with wet hands.
- Unplug small appliances and equipment when not in use.
- Keep electrical toys and appliances away from sinks or water.
- Check cords regularly to ensure they are in good condition. Keep cords away from children and pets.
  - Don't overload outlets or plug one extension cord into another.

- Don't run extension cords under carpets or rugs.
- Don't pull a plug out by the cord.
- Use plug protectors to cover empty electrical outlets.

### Outdoors

- Pay attention to high-voltage warning signs. Stay away from substations, power lines and other utility equipment. Immediately report any open or damaged equipment to MGE.
- Don't climb trees or fly drones, kites, balloons or model planes near electric lines. Aerial toys can conduct electricity if they are flown too close to overhead lines.
- Avoid using ladders, poles or other tools near overhead lines.
- When using a hose or sprinkler, don't let water contact overhead wires.
- Don't position a swimming pool under electric lines. Keep electrical items away from pools.

- Use only weather-resistant extension cords that are marked for outdoor use.

Get more electric safety tips at [mge.com/electricsafety](https://mge.com/electricsafety).

### Plant smart

Trees and shrubs can beautify your property and even help save energy. They should, however, be planted away from overhead lines and transformers. Follow these tips to stay safe and avoid problems:

- Plant only low-growing trees and shrubs under overhead lines.
- Take precautions when planting around transformers by allowing three feet of space on the sides of and behind transformers and ten feet of clear space in front of transformers so MGE crews can access them for maintenance.

Visit [mge.com/planting](https://mge.com/planting) for more information.

### Dig smart

If you're planting a tree, putting up a fence or planning another outdoor project, remember to contact Diggers Hotline at least three working days in advance. This allows time for MGE and other utilities to locate and mark underground facilities in your planned work area. Contacting Diggers Hotline is the law and can prevent potential hazards.

Call 811 or submit an online request at [diggershotline.com](https://diggershotline.com).



Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.



# Prepare for stormy weather



Storms can strike quickly—sometimes causing power outages and other dangerous conditions. Plan ahead now to keep your family safe.

- Stay away from downed or sagging power lines. Any lines dangling or lying on the ground may have high voltage running through them. Call MGE immediately at (608) 252-7111.
- Develop an emergency plan everyone understands.
- Prepare a disaster kit containing water, food, tools, first-aid supplies and a battery-operated weather radio.
- Do not touch an electric shock victim. You could get shocked or even killed. Call 911 instead.
- If you are in a car accident involving power lines, stay inside the vehicle and wait for help. If fire or other immediate danger requires you to exit the vehicle, jump clear of the car and land on both feet.
- Be sure no part of your body is touching the car when your feet touch the ground. Then shuffle with your legs close together to move away from the vehicle.

## If the power goes out

Storms or accidents are the primary causes of power outages. If your power is out, follow these steps to help get it restored:

- Check if your neighbors' power is out. If it's not, check your fuses or circuit breakers. If your neighbors' power is out, look out your windows for fallen wires or tree limbs on a line. Remember to stay away from downed wires.
- Report the outage online at [mge.com/outage](https://mge.com/outage), by texting "OUT" to 73904 or by calling MGE at (608) 252-7111.
- If storms cause electric wires to get tangled with tree limbs or fences on your property, do NOT start cleanup yourself. Wait for MGE.
- If you run a gasoline-powered generator, follow manufacturer guidelines. Be sure to place it outside and a safe distance from your home to avoid a buildup of carbon monoxide.
- Avoid using candles. The fire risk is too great.
- Minimize the potential for further impact by unplugging sensitive electronic equipment and turning

off light switches. Power strips and surge-protection devices can protect appliances and other electronics during power surges. Consumers should consult a licensed electrician and/or check with the appliance manufacturer regarding their specific needs.

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed.
- Use a smartphone, battery-powered computer or battery-powered radio for news updates.
- If your power remains out after your neighbors' power is restored, call MGE.

## Check MGE's outage map

Visit [mge.com/outage](https://mge.com/outage) to see where unexpected problems with equipment or power lines, or planned maintenance activities, are affecting customers in MGE's electric service area.

## Sign up for notifications

MGE customers may opt in to receive notifications by text, email and/or automated voice call if the power goes out at their home or business. Sign up for notifications in My Account.

## Water heater safety

For safety and efficiency, set the temperature of your water heater between 120 and 125 degrees. It's a good idea to use a thermometer to measure the temperature at the faucet.

## Properly dispose of CFLs

Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) contain small amounts of mercury, which is a hazardous substance. When these bulbs go to the landfill, the glass breaks and mercury is released in the atmosphere. To prevent this, be sure to properly recycle all old CFLs. Visit [mge.com/recycle](https://mge.com/recycle) or [epa.gov/cfl](https://epa.gov/cfl) for more information.

