



# MAY IS ELECTRICAL

## Protect Your Home From Electrical Hazards and Keep

Electricity plays many roles in our lives, from powering baby monitors, cellphones and lighting, to running HVAC systems and appliances. It's no wonder we take for granted the instant response from systems and devices when we flip a switch or hook to a power outlet. May is National Electrical Safety Month, and here at Choptank Electric Cooperative, we think it's a great time to look around your home and check for potential electrical safety hazards.

Remember, every electrical device has a purpose and a service life-span. While we may extend their operations with maintenance and care, none of them are designed to last or work forever. When electricity is involved, failures can present electrical hazards that could be avoided with periodic inspections.

### Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters

Outdoor outlets or those in potentially damp locations like kitchens, bathrooms or laundry rooms often include GFCI features. They are designed to sense abnormal current flows, breaking the circuit to prevent potential electric shocks from devices plugged into the outlets.

The average GFCI outlet is designed to last about 10 years, but in areas prone to electrical storms or power surges, they can wear out in five years or less. Check them frequently by pressing the red test button. Make sure you hit the black reset button when you are done. Contact a licensed electrician to replace any failing GFCI outlets.

### Loose or Damaged Outlets or Switches

Unstable electrical outlets or wall

switches with signs of heat damage or discoloration can offer early warnings of potential shock or electrical fire hazards. Loose connections can allow electrical current arcing. If you see these warning signs, it may be time to contact an electrician.

### Surge Protectors

Power strips with surge protectors can help safeguard expensive equipment like televisions, home entertainment systems, and computer components from power spikes. Voltage spikes are measured in joules, and surge protectors are rated for the number of joules they can effectively absorb. That means if your surge protector is rated at 1,000 joules, it should be replaced when it hits or passes that limit. When the limit is reached, protection stops, and



# Your Source for News & Information



## THIS MONTH'S FEATURES

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Updated information about how the coronavirus pandemic is affecting normal operations at Choptank Electric will be made available via social media.

# SAFETY MONTH

## Your Family Safe.

you're left with a basic power strip. Some surge protectors include indicator lights that flicker to warn you when they've stopped working as designed, but many do not. If your electrical system takes a major hit, or if you don't remember when you bought your surge protector, replacement may be the best option.

### Extension Cords

If you use extension cords regularly to connect devices and equipment to your wall outlets, you may live in an under-wired home. With a growing number of electrical devices connecting your family to the electricity you receive from Choptank Electric Cooperative, having enough outlets in just the right spots can be challenging. Remember, extension cords are designed for temporary, occasional or periodic use.

If an extension cord gets noticeably warm when in use, it could be undersized for the intended use. If it shows any signs of frayed, cracked or heat-damaged insulation, it should be replaced. If the grounding prong is missing, crimped or loose, a grounded cord will not provide the protection designed into its performance. And always make sure that extension cords used in outdoor or potentially damp locations are rated for exterior use.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, approximately 51,000 electrical fires are reported each year in the United States, causing more than \$1.3 billion in annual property damage.

Electricity is a necessity for modern living, and Choptank Electric Cooperative is committed to providing safe,

reliable and affordable power to all of our members. We hope you'll keep these electrical safety tips in mind so that you can note any potential hazards before damage occurs.



## 2020 Youth Tour Participants!

Congratulations to our 2020 Youth Tour participants! Choptank Electric Cooperative is proud to sponsor these five high school juniors for the trip of a lifetime during June 21-25, 2020, in Washington, D.C\*. The selected students had to complete a thorough application, which included an essay and a 90-second creative video.



Alyssa Boltz  
Mardela High School  
Wicomico County



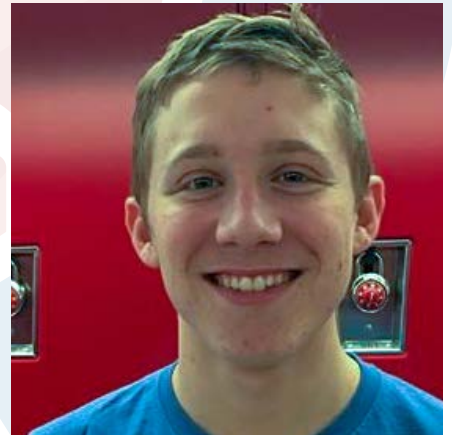
Thomas Connolley  
Bohemia Manor High School  
Cecil County



Quinn Thompson Handel  
The Salisbury School  
Wicomico County



Lauren Kang  
The Salisbury School  
Wicomico County



Owen Mank  
Colonel Richardson High School  
Caroline County

### About Youth Tour

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association is the national service organization that represents the nation's more than 900 private, not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives. Their mission is to promote and support co-ops and to champion their business model. The NRECA Youth Tour plays an important part in their mission by exposing youth to the nation's capital, history, the co-op business model, and more.

*\*Unfortunately, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has caused organizers to cancel the 2020 Youth Tour to safeguard the health of its more than 1,500 participants. The cancellation should not diminish the achievement of the youths who were tapped for the prestigious honor, as well as the many volunteer chaperones. They represent the best of their co-ops and we appreciate their commitment to Youth Tour.*



## Approved Legislation Brings Broadband Within Reach



Legislation to allow Choptank Electric Cooperative to deliver broadband to members on the Eastern Shore passed unanimously in the House and Senate on March 18. Dubbed “an emergency bill,” it becomes effective as soon as Governor Hogan signs it.

“The team here at Choptank Electric will work tirelessly to achieve this life-changing infrastructure deployment for our members,” said Mike Malandro, President and CEO of the Cooperative.

“The artful negotiations of Speaker Pro Tem Delegate Sheree Sample-Hughes (District 37A) and Senator Steve Hershey (District 36) really pulled this bill through in the final hours of the General Assembly session,” explained Malandro. “We are grateful for their support and the leadership of Chairman Dereck Davis and Chairwoman Delores Kelley to get this bill passed on the last day of Session.”

“The dedication of the entire Eastern Shore delegation,

county elected officials and our grassroots members is what made this happen,” concluded Malandro.

Under the bill, Choptank Electric Cooperative must conduct a vote of its members to become member-regulated. That vote will occur after at least two regional information meetings are held. Planning for meetings and the vote of members will begin immediately, with due regard to the current COVID-19 state of emergency in Maryland.

With a positive vote from members, the Cooperative will quickly move forward with broadband plans. These include meetings with members who desire broadband service to begin laying out the deployment schedule. And, application to the FCC for Rural Development Opportunity Act grant funds to bring down the cost of broadband installation for all members.

Updated information about broadband plans will be posted on our website soon.

**Our offices will be closed on  
Monday, May 25, 2020, to  
observe Memorial Day.**



## In Case of Stray Voltage, Hire a Qualified Electrician



It's finally here: the pool is open! Family and friends are gathered around, ready to take a refreshing swim and enjoy your famous BBQ. However, something seems to dampen the mood, as some of your guests are complaining of experiencing a tingling shock when they contact the pool's hand rails as they get out of the water, or when sitting on the pool deck with their feet in the water.

What could be causing this? Assuming the "shocks" are not the result of faulty wiring or equipment, they are most likely the result of Neutral-to-Earth Voltage (NEV).

NEVs are natural, and normally exist between the grounded equipment or "conductor," and local earth or metal structure around the pool that is not grounded. However certain conditions, such as the pool's wiring not meeting national standards, corroded parts due to salt or chlorine exposure, or even a piece of equipment

that is not properly grounded can aggravate the situation, translating into those annoying shocks.

Additional settings where NEV shocks (also known as stray voltage) may occur include hot tubs, sink faucets, outside hose faucets, boat decks, and street light poles. Even farm animals making contact with farmstead milking, feeding or watering equipment can experience these tingling shocks.

At the end of the day, the best way to prevent NEV shocks is to have a qualified, licensed electrician perform any kind of electrical work at your home, farm or business, and perform regular maintenance on your electrical systems. If you believe you are experiencing issues due to NEVs, contact the Choptank Electric Cooperative Member Service Center at 1-877-892-0001 for additional information regarding NEV testing and NEVs in general.



## New SmartHub Feature: Add Multiple Users!

Are you taking care of an elderly relative and need to keep track of their Choptank Electric account? What if your son or daughter is away for college and they need you to keep an eye on their electric bill? Or maybe you want to share bill information with a roommate?

SmartHub now offers the ability to add multiple users to manage a single account. Accounts will have a primary account holder with additional users labeled as secondary account holders.

While primary account holders cannot manage secondary users via the SmartHub app, they can do so by logging into the SmartHub web portal.

Primary account holders can manage all secondary

user settings, including unsubscribing, resetting passwords, and disabling two-factor authentication.

To add secondary users to your SmartHub account, visit [www.choptankelectric.coop](http://www.choptankelectric.coop) and login to SmartHub. Go to My Profile > My Information > Manage my Registered Accounts Screen > Manage Additional Users.

From there, you can add additional users, as many as you would like! You will need to enter an email and a name to add a user.

For more information about SmartHub and its features, visit <https://choptankelectric.com/payment-options-your-bill> or call our Member Service Center at 1-877-892-0001.



## Have Solar Panels? Keep These Safety Tips in Mind!

# SAFETY NEAR SOLAR

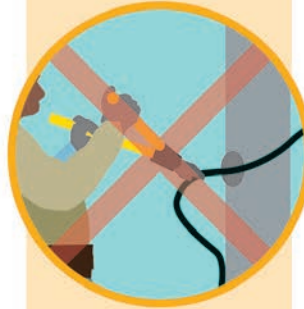
Like any other source of electricity, solar panels can pose potential hazards. Keep these safety tips in mind when you're near solar panels.



Stay at least 10 feet away from the installation.



Never walk on solar panels.



Never cut any wiring to the solar panels.



Never touch broken or damaged solar panels.

## February and March 2020 Trust Awards

### February

- Eastern Shore Ballet Theatre - \$500
- Wellness Promotions at Caroline County Health Department - \$1,300
- Lockerman Middle School Band - \$500
- Easton Church of God - \$500
- Quilters by the Sea - \$750
- MAC Inc. - \$300
- Bay Hundred Community Vol. - \$3,000
- Dorchester County Historical Society - \$1,500
- His Hope Ministries - \$4,644.75

The total of approved applications for February was \$35,815.22, which included \$22,820.47 for individual home and medical expenses.

### March

- Cambridge Women's Club - \$500
- Lifetime Wells International - \$700
- Band Association of Parents and Students North Caroline High School - \$766

The total of approved applications for March was \$16,453.14, which included \$14,487.14 for individual home and medical expenses.

**The Choptank Electric Trust is a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation funded by Operation Round Up donations from members of Choptank Electric. Funds from the Trust are distributed in all nine counties of Maryland's Eastern Shore.**



## Let Your Home Breathe – Air Filters Explained

How well is your home breathing? Much like our bodies, our homes rely on a supply of air and a way for the spent air to return. An efficient, unrestricted pathway for this air to flow means greater comfort, less energy used, and a potential reduction of your energy bill.

One of the most efficient and cost-effective ways to improve airflow in your home is to replace air filters regularly. Air filters are easy to manage! Just toss the dirty, clogged filters and replace them with new ones that can save up to 15% on your bill.

Often overlooked, savings brought by a simple change of air filters can be substantial. How is that possible? Let's return to our example of the human body. Imagine going for a run outside. If you were to run with a thick towel over your nose and mouth, that represents the effect a dirty or clogged air filter has on your HVAC system. Dirty or clogged air filters restrict the flow of air into and out of the home, therefore, making your HVAC run longer to try and compensate for the lack of air it is receiving back. Take it a step further, and imagine having your nose or mouth completely blocked, so that you could only breathe through one or the other. That would be similar to having an entire return vent blocked by furniture or artwork.

Now that we understand how important these filters are, how do we know what to look for and how often to change them? First of all, it is important to know where your filters are located. Do you have your return filters in a vent? Or is your filter in the air handler? It could be

both. For energy efficiency purposes, it is best to only have filters in one place or the other. If filters exist both in the vent and the air handler, it increases the amount of work for your system to circulate the appropriate amount of air. Our recommendation is to eliminate the vent filters as long as the air handler filter is accessible, and you are willing to change it often. This will grant the added financial benefit of only having to replace one filter (in the air handler) as opposed to many (each return vent).

Also, unless medical reasons exist where extra filtration is needed, there is no need to purchase expensive filters that come standard in the air handlers.

A normal 1-inch filter, even if the filter is in the air handler, is recommended. Most air handlers have brackets that fit a 1-inch filter. This is only recommended if you're willing to change the filter often as it will get dirty quicker than the thicker filters.

Once you are at the stage where filters only exist in one area or the other, just make sure to check them often and change them when they appear dirty. A layer of dust is a pretty good indicator that your system airflow is being restricted. You will eventually learn how long it takes for this to happen in your home, but most manufacturers recommend changing filters every 30-60 days to maintain optimal airflow.

For more energy efficiency tips and tricks, visit our website at [www.choptankelectric.coop](http://www.choptankelectric.coop) or call our Member Service Center at 1-877-892-0001 and ask for our Energy Efficiency Coordinator, Justus Gellert.





### About Choptank Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Choptank Electric, a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, is a not-for-profit, member-owned, electric distribution Co-op serving approximately 54,000 residential, commercial, and industrial members in all nine counties on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

P.O. Box 430,  
Denton, MD 21629

Toll Free:  
1-877-892-0001

Outage Reporting:  
1-800-410-4790,  
toll free,  
24 hours/day,  
7 days/week.

Automated Member  
Service Line:  
1-866-999-4574, toll free

[www.choptankelectric.coop](http://www.choptankelectric.coop)

**President and CEO**  
Micheal E. Malandro



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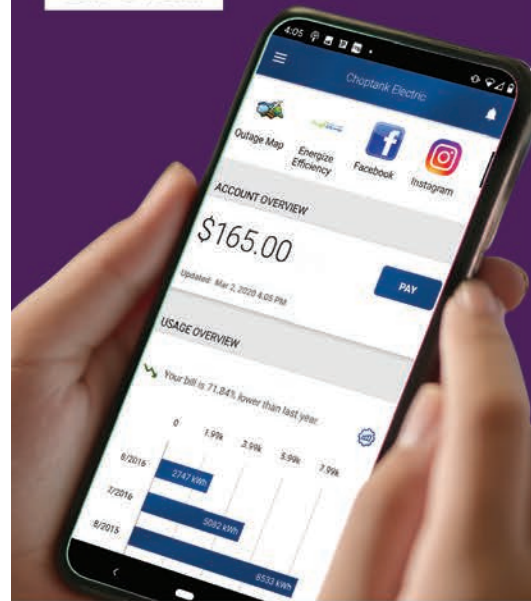
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## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When the weather is nice, put your grill to use! During summer months, cooking outdoors is a great way to save energy and eliminate unwanted heat from cooking indoors.

