

Why Does It Take So Long To Get Power Back On?



MESSAGE FROM
GENERAL MANAGER/CEO JERRY BOZE

WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT, some folks wonder why it takes Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative so long to turn them back on. Isn't it as easy as a flip of a switch? Unfortunately, it is not. To help members understand the time and effort involved, let's examine the meticulous process of restoring power after an outage.

When an outage is reported, the dispatcher's system can "ping" other meters near the reported area to help pinpoint the affected location. Then linemen are dispatched to the area. Once crews arrive, they investigate potential causes. Our crews already know where the fuses and breakers are and which one is predicted to be open. (Fuses and breakers are closed when operative and open when there is an outage.)

When a crew identifies the open device, the dispatcher enters this information into the system, providing an indication on every account affected.

Next, linemen patrol the line that is without power. This could mean driving or walking past miles of line, closely examining every pole, transformer, wire, cross-arm and insulator to see if anything is out of the ordinary. The crews also look for animals, balloons, tree limbs and other objects that could be touching the lines. If it is dark, stormy or foggy, weather conditions can make this process longer and harder for our linemen.

Once they locate the cause of the outage, the linemen verify again that the line is not energized before installing grounding devices on the line to ensure their safety. After placing the necessary safeguards, they can begin working to solve the problems—and those can seem endless.

Linemen might have to cut up a tree that has fallen on a line, requiring chain saws and other ground-maintenance equipment. They might need to remove broken lines and string new ones. They might have to remove a broken pole and install a new pole, transformer and other equipment. In that case, linemen must call the co-op office with details, such as size and type, then wait while the equipment is delivered.

Also, if a new hole must be dug for a pole, the linemen must call for someone to locate underground telephone or gas lines in the area. This kind of "emergency locate" requires a minimum of two hours to respond to the request, but it might take longer to get a state-certified contractor to check the area for other underground utilities. The linemen are not permitted to dig until the contractor has approved the area for digging. For this reason, our men often will attempt to pull the old pole out of the ground and put the new pole in the same hole.

Once a new pole and equipment are installed, wires spliced back together and any other required repairs made, the grounding devices must be removed from the lines. Then finally, power can be restored.

As you can see, outage restoration is a complicated process, requiring painstaking attention and compliance with many safety measures. It can't be accomplished with just the flip of a switch. But our linemen always work as quickly and safely as possible to ensure that your power returns as quickly possible.

As always, we thank you for your patience and cooperation as we work to restore your power.



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HAPPY
VALENTINE'S DAY!
FROM TVEC

Tuesday, February 14



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Power Tip

A crackling fire in the hearth warms the house, but don't let it heat up your electric bill! Caulk around the fireplace hearth, use a fireplace insert and keep the damper closed when no fire is burning.

Space Heater Safety

Small heaters can come with a big risk. These tips can help you stay warm *and* safe.

SPACE HEATERS CAN BE A QUICK WAY to heat up a room. However, they can be as dangerous as they are convenient if used improperly. Space heaters cause 25,000 home fires and 6,000 emergency room visits each year, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

Approximately one-third of all house fires nationwide happen during the cold home-heating months between December and February. Equipment that is intended to add a little extra warmth, such as space heaters, is the leading cause of these fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative urges everyone in the home to understand the importance of using space heaters safely.

Some cities have banned the use of many types of portable space heaters. Before purchasing or using any type of space heater, check with your local fire department to find out if it is legal in your community.

Heed these precautions when using electric space heaters:

1. Make sure the unit is equipped with an emergency tip-over shutoff feature and heating-element guards.
2. Read and follow all of the manufacturer's instructions for operation and care.
3. Before using a space heater, make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are in good working condition.
4. Check to make sure the heater is clean and in good condition. If you have any doubts, do not use the heater.
5. Space heaters have one purpose: to provide supplemental heating. Never use them to thaw pipes, cook food, or dry clothing or towels.
6. Remember to keep space heaters at least 3 feet from combustible liquids such as fuel, spray cans and paint, as well as flammable materials such as draperies, blankets and sofas.
7. Create a cleared safe zone around the heater. Do not allow children or pets near the heater to prevent accidental shocks or burns.
8. Do not overload circuits. Never use extension cords or multiple plugs with a

space heater, and make sure the unit is not plugged into the same circuit as other electric appliances.

9. If your space heater is plugged into a ground-fault circuit interrupter that trips, don't assume there is something wrong with the GFCI. Immediately stop using the heater until a professional can check it—otherwise, a shock could occur.

10. Never leave space heaters unattended. Turn off your space heater and unplug it before leaving the room or going to bed.



Replace your old space heater with a newer model with safety ratings.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH



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Honey Cheese Bacon Chicken

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
- ¾ cup honey
- ½ cup Dijon or creole mustard
- ¼ teaspoon lemon pepper, or more to taste
- 4 slices bacon, cut in half
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella or provolone cheese

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Apply cooking spray to a metal baking dish. Pound chicken breast halves to an even thickness.
2. Mix together honey, mustard and lemon pepper in a small dish. Place the breast halves in baking dish and drizzle evenly with the honey-mustard mixture.
3. Bake chicken 25 minutes, then top each breast half with 2 bacon pieces and increase oven heat to 400. Continue baking about 7–8 minutes.
4. Top with cheese and bake another 3 minutes or until chicken juices run clear, bacon is crisp and cheese is bubbly. Serve with brown or white rice.

This recipe won the *Five Ingredients or Fewer* contest in September 2015. Submit your *Texas Gulf Shrimp* recipe to *Texas Co-op Power* by February 10 for a chance to win \$100 and be published. Visit texascooppower.com/contests.

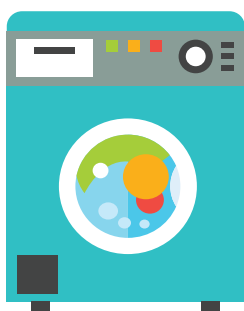
Find this and more delicious recipes online at **TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM**



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Buyers Guide

Purchasing **ENERGY STAR**-certified appliances and electronics is a great way to save energy in your home. But how do you choose the right product? It depends on your energy-saving goals *and* how you use energy in your home.



Do you wash multiple loads of laundry each week? Investing in an ENERGY STAR-certified washer could save you around \$45 on your utility bill each year. Some of the top-rated ENERGY STAR-certified large washers come from LG and Samsung. Visit ENERGY STAR's "Most Efficient 2016" page to learn more.



Home computers can use a shocking amount of energy each year. If all computers in the U.S. were ENERGY STAR certified, we would save more than \$1 billion in energy costs per year. If you can't buy an ENERGY STAR-certified computer, consider updating the power management setting on your computer. Visit energystar.gov/products/office_equipment/computers.



The larger TVs get, the more energy they use. But ENERGY STAR-certified TVs are, on average, 25% more efficient than conventional models. LG, Samsung and Vizio make the list of ENERGY STAR's most efficient 2016 TVs.

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Lower Thermostat To Lower Bills

Small changes can lead to big savings during cold months

TEXAS WEATHER IS UNPREDICTABLE. Striking a balance between comfort and energy costs can be a challenge that changes from one day—or sometimes hour—to the next. The last of the Texas winter is on the horizon, but you and your family can still make changes to lower your electric bills before spring.

To help avoid higher-than-normal energy bills, Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative encourages you to use electricity efficiently. Setting the thermostat to 68 degrees when home, and lower when you're away, saves money. The U.S. Department of Energy reports that lowering the thermostat 10–15 degrees for eight hours a day can

trim heating bills 5–15 percent. As an example, this one change could make \$20–\$30 in savings for a \$200 electric bill.

Additional tips to reduce energy use:

Turn off and unplug nonessential lights and appliances.

Close shades and blinds at night to reduce heat loss through windows. Open them on sunny days to capture solar heat.

If possible, avoid using inefficient and costly backup electric resistance heating (“Emergency Heat” on your thermostat) and use space heaters sparingly.

Change furnace filters often.

Long-term home repairs and upgrades that save energy:

Install and utilize programmable thermostats.

Seal air leaks around doors, windows, plumbing, wiring and any other places where outside air can infiltrate.

Ensure that exterior walls and attics contain the recommended amount and type of insulation.



Bundle up this winter and save on heating bills.

It is also a good time to consider scheduling a free home energy audit by a TVEC energy expert. No two homes are the same, so pinpointing the most effective and efficient changes for you will be time well spent. Call us at 800-766-9576 or visit www.tvec.net for more information.

Win \$25 Just for Reading

Somewhere, hidden on Pages 18–23, is a TVEC account number. Read closely. If the account number is yours, contact the Member Services Department by February 28 to receive a \$25 credit on your electric bill. Don't miss out—you could be a winner.



Fire Departments Take Grants “Full Circle” To Benefit TVEC Members

Trinity Valley Electric Co-op member contributions through Operation Round Up go to many good causes throughout the region, but the TVEC Charitable Foundation support of local fire departments may have the most broadly felt impact.

Fire department representatives gathered at the TVEC



Fire department representatives attend an arcing and safety demonstration in Kaufman.

Kaufman and Athens offices in December to receive donation funds totaling \$135,000.

“The money they are giving is directly contributing to safety in their area,” said Chandler VFD firefighter Wayne Heaton. “It is a full

circle. This is something that can affect your house or your neighbor’s house.”

Each department in the TVEC service area received a \$2,500 grants from the foundation, but the firefighter’s noted that cooperation between departments means everyone gets maximum benefit.

“With mutual aid, volunteer departments go to other areas as well,” said Brian Folden, another Chandler volunteer. “We had three calls to West Side VFD for structure fires within one week.”

Volunteer fire departments are funded through several channels, but local contributions are key in keeping equipment ready when emergencies arise.

“Even though it is volunteer and the labor is free, everything else is not. It takes a lot of money to run a volunteer department,” Heaton said. “Things like our Jaws of Life generator—that has to be working on the first pull, or it can be a matter of life or death.”



Representatives of TVEC area fire departments gathered in Kaufman and Athens to receive Operation Round Up grants totaling \$135,000.

TVEC Charitable Foundation

THE TVEC CHARITABLE FOUNDATION recently awarded 6 grants totaling \$18,500. Recipients of the grants are:



Wills Point ISD - E.O. Woods Intermediate School - \$1,500
E.O. Woods Intermediate's backpack food program provides take-home meals for students in need during school breaks and weekends.



St. Therese Charity - \$3,000
St. Therese Catholic Food Bank provides food for residents in need, serving 1,842 families in 2015.



Mabank Area Good Samaritans - \$4,000
Mabank Area Good Samaritans provides food items to those in need including meals at Thanksgiving and Christmas.



Pilot Club of Wills Point- \$3,000
The Pilot Club of Wills Point provides help for individuals in need of Lifeline communication devices and medical alert call buttons.



Van Zandt County Veterans Memorial - \$2,000
Located in Canton, this memorial includes military vehicles from each service branch on display and hosts educational opportunities for students. 60159162001



Henderson County Food Pantry - \$5,000
Located in Athens, the Henderson County Food pantry provides food assistance to those in need. They provided food for 12,999 people in 2015.

Founded in 2013, the TVEC Charitable Foundation is an independent, nonprofit organization. The foundation was created to serve the community and help improve the quality of life for residents in our service area. **The foundation is funded entirely by donations from TVEC members who participate in Operation Round Up.** For more information, please call 1-800-766-9576 or visit TVEC.net.