

Your Energy Connection

Rocky Mount Public Utilities' Monthly Newsletter



April 2016

GIVE YOUR HOME AN ELECTRICAL SAFETY CHECKUP

Just as wellness checkups are necessary for good health, routine safety checkups are critical for the safety of your home. Use this checklist to help you find and fix electrical fire hazards.

- Check to see if smoke alarms are on each level of the home, outside each sleeping area, and inside each bedroom.
- Test smoke alarms monthly. Replace the batteries once per year and the smoke alarm every 10 years.
- Inspect all outlets and switches to ensure they are working properly. Call a licensed electrician if your switches or outlets are discolored, warm to the touch, or making buzzing, crackling or sizzling sounds. Also, check to see if plugs fit snugly into all outlets. Outlets without a snug fit should be replaced by a licensed electrician.
- Check for damaged appliance cords (e.g. cracked or frayed). If a cord is damaged, throw the appliance away or have the cord professionally repaired. Also, check the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission website (www.cpsc.gov) for recent recalls of any appliances in your home.
- Check extension cords to see if they are being used on a permanent basis. If so, have a licensed electrician install new outlets or move equipment closer to an outlet. (Extension cords are designed for temporary use. Extended use may damage the cord, creating a fire hazard.)
- Make sure any extension cords used outside are marked "for outdoor use."
- Inspect light fixtures to make sure you're using the appropriate wattage light bulb. Using a higher wattage bulb than what's recommended may overheat the fixture, leading to a fire.

For more electrical safety information, visit www.esfi.org.

Please note that all electrical work should be performed by an electrician licensed by the state of North Carolina. Visit the State of NC Board of Examiners of Electrical Contractors website at www.ncbeec.org to verify or search for licensed electricians.



TREE TRIMMING

In order to provide customers with safe, reliable electric service, Rocky Mount Public Utilities (RMPU) maintains an aggressive Tree Trimming program for power lines. Fallen trees and branches are a major cause of widespread power outages after a hurricane or ice storm. Flickering and dimming lights can be caused by tree limbs rubbing or laying against the power lines. Therefore, having a tree trimming program is crucial for providing reliable service to customers.

RMPU prunes trees based on a technique called "directional pruning." With directional pruning, entire limbs or portions of limbs growing toward the lines are removed at the main branch or trunk at a point where they would naturally shed if they had cause. By doing this, future growth will be directed away from the wires, and rapidly growing attached sprouts will be minimized. RMPU follows a pattern of trimming known as circuit trimming. This means the trees are trimmed along an electric circuit. Trimming is also done in "hot spots." This is when there is a limb laying or rubbing against an electric line and causing problems.

The citywide Tree Trimming program runs on a five-year cycle. Visit rockymountnc.gov/utilities for more information.

FIXED MONTHLY PAYMENTS AVAILABLE THROUGH EQUAL PAY PROGRAM

Depending on the season, your utility bills can vary greatly from month to month due to increases and decreases in your energy consumption. If you prefer a fixed monthly payment, consider the Equal Pay Program.

The Equal Pay Program eliminates fluctuations by averaging your annual utility charges and spreading it over 11 equal payments. During the 12th month (i.e. the same month in which you signed up), the account is reviewed and calculated for the difference between the charges billed and the amount paid. If there is an underpayment, you will need to make a payment for the difference. If there is an overpayment, you will receive a refund. This annual review is referred to as settlement.

Customers may sign up for the Equal Pay Program in April through November by calling (252) 972-1250 or visiting the Customer Service office in City Hall at 331 S. Franklin Street. For more information on utility bill pay options, visit rockymountnc.gov/utilities.

HOW MUCH DOES LITTER COST YOU?

Littering is illegal in all 50 states. In North Carolina, littering could cost you up to a \$2,000 fine, community service work and/or a point on your driver's license.

Why Litter Is Your Problem:

Litter clean-up cost our state more than \$16 million last year.

Litter threatens our wildlife, the Tar River Reservoir, and other waterways such as Tar River, City Lake, creeks, and ponds.

Litter provides habitats for disease carrying rodents and mosquitoes.

Litter decreases property values.

Litter impacts the decision of businesses and families to locate to a community.

How to Stop Litter:

- Place a bag in your vehicle to collect personal trash instead of throwing it out the window. Call Keep America Beautiful of Nash & Edgecombe Counties (KAB) at (252) 467-4960 to request a FREE bag for your vehicle.
- If you smoke, never throw your cigarette butts or cigar tips on the ground. Call KAB at (252) 467-4960 and request a FREE pocket ashtray.
- At home, secure lids on your trash and recycling carts.
- Remove trash from the back of your pickup truck.
- If you see litter, pick it up. Even if it is just a chip bag or gum wrapper, that's one less piece of litter.
- Clean up after your dog. Yes, that is litter too!

TRIVIA – ANSWER FOR A CHANCE TO WIN!

TRIVIA QUESTION: What event is held March 1 through May 31 to help clean up and beautify the Twin Counties?

Submit answers to trivia@rockymountnc.gov by Friday, May 6. Five randomly chosen customers with the correct answer will receive a free LED night light. Please include your name and address in the email.

March trivia question: "RMPU electric customers can earn up to \$129 per year in billing credits by signing up for what program?" Answer: Load Management



FREE COMPOST

Each year from April to October, the Public Works and Water Resources department gives away free compost to City of Rocky Mount residents.

Residents may pick up the compost at 1244 Arrow Road on the following days:

- Every Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- The first Saturday of each month from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (On holiday weekends, compost is available on the second Saturday of the month.)

Compost is generated by recycling the tree limbs, loose leaves and vegetative material collected by the City. For more information, visit rockymountnc.gov/utilities or call (252) 467-4906.

CONTACT US

Customer Service(252) 972-1250
 Bill payment1-866-288-7608
 Start/stop services(252) 972-1250
 Utility emergencies(252) 467-4800

CUSTOMER SERVICE HOURS

Monday-Thursday: 8:30 a.m.-7 p.m.;
 Friday: 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

www.rockymountnc.gov/utilities

