

# Your Energy Connection



April 2015

## Inspect Your Home for Electrical Safety Hazards

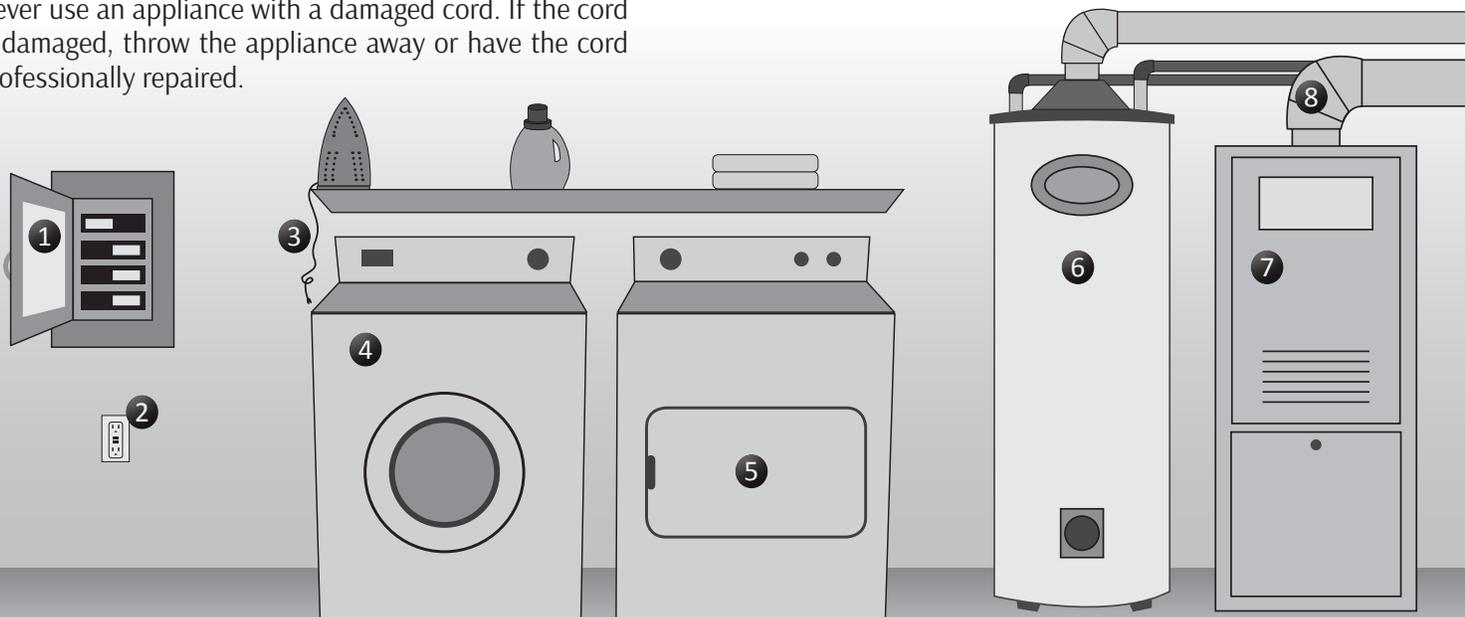
With the onset of the spring season, many will welcome the warmer weather by cleaning and organizing their homes. In honor of Electrical Safety Month in May, the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) recommends that homeowners inspect the safety of their homes while spring cleaning to ensure electrical hazards are eliminated along with dust and clutter. An important area to inspect is the location of the home's heating equipment and electrical distribution systems. ESFI recommends the following safety tips:

1. Check the label inside the door or cover of your electrical service panel to ensure circuit breakers and fuses are correctly labeled with their amperage and their corresponding rooms, circuits or outlets.
2. Test Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) monthly. GFCIs are required by code in certain areas of the home (e.g. basements, kitchens, bathrooms, garages, etc.) and should be used in any area where water may come in contact with electrical products. **Please have a licensed electrician perform all electrical work to ensure GFCIs are compatible with the home's existing wiring system.**
3. Never use an appliance with a damaged cord. If the cord is damaged, throw the appliance away or have the cord professionally repaired.

4. Check for excessive vibration or movement when the washing machine or dryer is operating, which can put stress on electrical connections.
5. Make sure the area around the dryer is free of clutter, and clean the dryer lint filter after each load.
6. Lower the setting on the water heater thermostat to 120°F or below. Some manufacturers set the default temperature to 140°F, which poses a scalding hazard.
7. Have your furnace cleaned and inspected annually by a licensed, qualified professional.
8. Make sure all fuel-burning equipment such as furnaces, stoves, and fireplaces are vented to the outside to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.

**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](http://www.ncbeec.org) to verify or search for licensed electricians.**

For more electrical safety information, visit [www.esfi.org](http://www.esfi.org) or check out *Electrical Safety Illustrated* at [www.rockymountnc.gov/utilities/dpu.html](http://www.rockymountnc.gov/utilities/dpu.html).



## Tree Trimming

In order to provide customers with safe, reliable electric service, the City of Rocky Mount maintains an aggressive Tree Trimming and right-of-way maintenance 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.

The city 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. They are removed 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. The city 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 5-year cycle (depending on the growth rate of individual trees). Visit [www.rockymountnc.gov/utilities/trees.html](http://www.rockymountnc.gov/utilities/trees.html) for more information on the Tree Trimming program.

## In the event of an outage...

To improve the response time for restoration in the event of a power outage, customers should call (252) 467-4800 to report their **current** contact number.

Dispatchers are available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week to take calls.

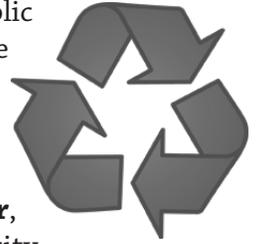
**To report a power outage or downed power lines or if you smell gas, call (252) 467-4800.**

**For all fire and police emergencies, always call 911.**



## Free Compost

The City of Rocky Mount Public Works department recycles the limbs accumulated from the Tree Trimming program by turning them into compost and mulch.



Each year **from April to October**, free compost is available for city residents 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. (except holiday weekends in which case compost is available on the second Saturday of the month)

For more information, visit [www.rockymountnc.gov/publicworks](http://www.rockymountnc.gov/publicworks) or call (252) 467-4906.

## 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, call Customer Service today and ask about the Equal Pay Program.

The Equal Pay Program eliminates fluctuations by averaging your annual energy usage and spreading it over 11 equal payments. The 12th month is a settlement month, which means the account will be reviewed to calculate the difference between the actual usage billed and the amount paid. If there is an underpayment, you will need to make a payment to the City of Rocky Mount for the difference. If there is an overpayment, the City will issue a refund.

Customers may sign up 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 [www.rockymountnc.gov/paymentoptions.html](http://www.rockymountnc.gov/paymentoptions.html).

