



**Sussex Rural  
Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



P1 / Electric Safety in the Dorm

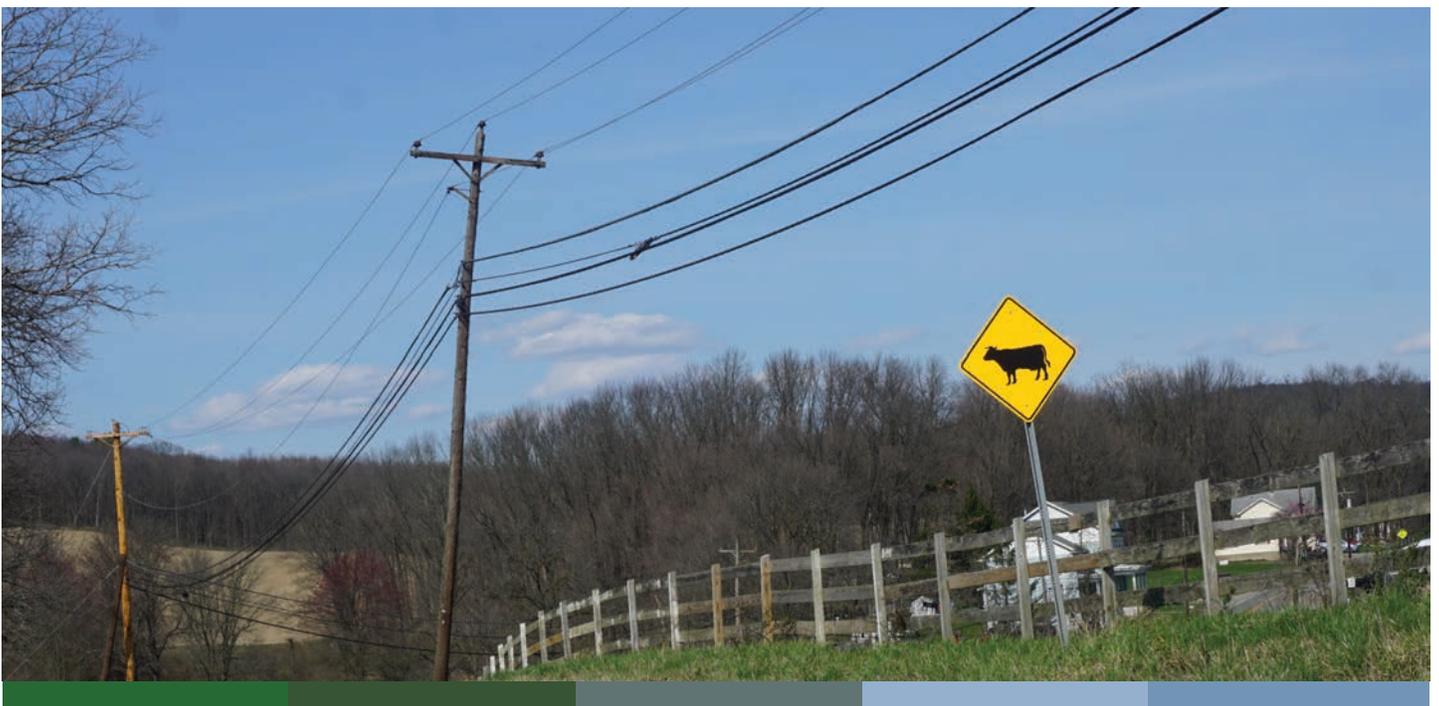
P3 / Let's Talk About Scams

# Currents

64 County Route 639, Sussex, NJ 07461 . p: 973.875.5101 . f: 973.875.4114

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[www.sussexrec.com](http://www.sussexrec.com)



## Electric Safety in the Dorm

By: Chris Reese, President & CEO  
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Due to COVID-19, this past school year ended in an unusual way for our community's students. Classes had to make the transition to a virtual setting, and things are still uncertain to this day as to how schools will handle reopening. Our local high schools' graduating classes of 2020 were certainly hit hard by this situation, costing them the usual milestones of prom, graduation, and other end-of-high-school activities.

Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative is

a partner to local schools in our education-based programs like our scholarships, Youth Tour, and the Bright Ideas classroom grant. We extend our congratulations to the class of 2020, despite the circumstances, and wish you the best as you look to your future.

For many parents reading this, their own child may be among this group of high school graduates taking their first steps toward the larger world, whether it's through career training, the military, trade

school, or college. This new step can be incredibly daunting, even during a normal year. My own daughter will be going off to college this Fall and as a parent, I think I might be more intimidated by this than she is.

Since this is an important part of growing up, it's best for us parents to offer them this independence

# Electric Safety in the Dorm

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while recognizing the right times for some guidance, which I know is easier said than done. If a child is going to be living away from home for the first time, many parents will focus on the usual “dangers” of college and society while overlooking a safety risk that can affect them every day.

Now, I’m admittedly a bit biased on this topic, but electrical safety is incredibly important and should be taken seriously, especially for those living on their own for the first time. (And when our children finally live on their own and have to start paying an electric bill, maybe they’ll finally turn off the light when they leave a room...)

Often-times students innocently plug in all of their usual desk tools—study lamps, laptops, TVs, game consoles, charging stations, and other electrical devices—into one outlet, unaware of the potential dangers. Plugging in too many appliances can overload an outlet, potentially causing an electrical or fire hazard. I think the only things I had to plug in at my freshman dorm room was a lamp, an alarm clock (not a phone), and a stereo (Remember them? Do they still exist?) to play my cassettes (definitely non-existent now). Things have certainly changed for students, and that electrical risk has only increased.



In its most recent report, the National Fire Protection Association estimates that U.S. fire departments respond to an average of 3,570 fires in dormitories, fraternity or sorority houses, and barracks each year. The tragic results: an average of seven deaths, 54 injuries, and nearly \$30 million in direct property damage per year.

Making use of a power strip can help alleviate this issue, but these too can be overloaded if care isn’t given. Erin Hollinshead, Executive Director of Safe Electricity, warns “The limited number of electric outlets in student rooms can tempt many to use multiple extension cords and power strips, which can cause cords to overheat, creating shock and fire hazards. Student residences crammed with books, papers, and bedding can allow the smallest spark to quickly become a blaze.”

This is why we would recommend making use of a smart power strip, like those from GoSund or AHRISE, to get around a low number of available outlets. These power strips will automatically cut power to devices in

standby mode, reducing the flow of power and the danger of overloading the circuit. For some other electric safety recommendations for students moving into their new dorm, see the chart below:

	Use extension cords only on a temporary basis, not as a permanent solution
	Never tack or nail an electrical cord to any surface or run cords in busy areas or under rugs where they can be damaged
	Unplug small appliances when not in use and all electronics when away for extended periods
	Keep all appliances and cords safely away from bedding, curtains, papers, and other flammable materials
	Never disable a smoke detector and never ignore a fire alarm - every time a fire alarm sounds, residents should calmly and quickly follow practiced procedures and immediately exit the building
	Ensure outlets near sinks are equipped with GFCIs (ground fault circuit interrupters) - circuit breakers that detect any abnormalities in the flow of power and quickly shut off power to prevent electrocution

Older wiring in student housing and apartments may not be able to handle the increased electrical demand of today’s college student. If use of an appliance frequently causes power to trip off, or if its power cord or the outlet feels hot, the appliance should be disconnected immediately and the condition reported to the landlord or campus housing staff.

These are all small issues that might be taken for granted, but they each have the potential to be catastrophic. When a child moves on to college or elsewhere outside the family home, it is now up to them to look out for their own safety. This is why, as parents, it’s important to instill in them an understanding of every day dangers they may face and how to best avoid them. With a father who works at an electric cooperative, my daughters have certainly had enough “electric safety talks” for a lifetime. However, many other young people haven’t had as much focus put on its importance. If your student will be moving out this fall, while teaching them to be safe out there, be sure to talk to them about electric safety too.

For more fire and electrical safety information, visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).

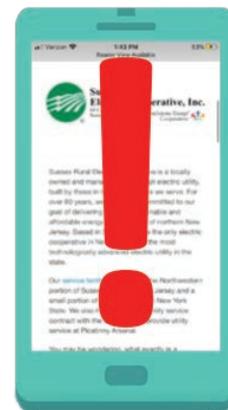


# Let's Talk About Scams

By: Steve Sokolowski, Marketing Associate  
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As a member-owned cooperative, Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative's mission since 1937 has always been to provide our members with the highest quality of service at the lowest possible price. Our primary interests are always with you, our members. Unfortunately, there are those out there who go to extreme lengths to take advantage of unsuspecting consumers, even pretending to represent their electric cooperative or other credible organizations.

Utility scams are common because of the vast number of utilities that exist, and consumers are understandably anxious at the idea of their utility notifying them of a sudden, unexpected disruption to their service. Secondly, new products and services in the energy industry provide an opening for scammers and pop-up companies to provide misleading information or shady products and services.



## Avoid Phone Scams

A common phone scam begins with a phone number that appears to be from a valid utility company, including Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative. The scammer will claim you have a past due account and threaten to disconnect service or take legal action. The scammer will typically demand that you use a prepaid debit card or money order, often within a very short, urgent time frame to pay the "past due" amount.

You can combat this scam by being aware of the status of your account. Never give your banking or personal information over the phone to someone you did not call. If you receive a suspicious call like this, call us directly at 973-875-5101 to report the potential scam. Do not use the phone number given by the scammer. We will be able to confirm with you your account's standing and notify other members to be wary of scammer activity.

## Avoid Solar Scams

Another scam we see from time to time is connected to rooftop solar. Homeowners with rooftop solar may receive a sales call offering an accessory, upgrade, or extended warranty to their solar array. The calls could be from scammers claiming to represent a solar company, promising to replace faulty or broken parts or improve efficiency. Again, if you are not expecting the call, don't be fooled. These calls offering misleading information are likely a scam. Call the company that installed the solar array if you think there may be a problem. Other than occasional cleaning, rooftop solar (if installed correctly) is virtually maintenance-free.

## Use Trusted Sources

If you're considering solar for your home, make sure you are working with a reputable company. Because this is still an emerging industry with evolving technology, many pop-up companies have appeared in an attempt to make a quick buck. Representatives of rooftop solar companies may have more sales experience than knowledge of the energy industry, and their primary goal could be making a sale and moving on to the next prospect.

While we do not directly offer rooftop solar as a service provided by the Co-op, you can always turn to us as a resource for information on solar and if it is right for you. In this ever-changing environment, it's important to remember you have a trusted energy advisor – your local electric cooperative. We are a community-focused organization that always puts our members first.

Remember, we're just one call or click away. If you ever have any questions about your electric service or bills, feel free to reach out – we're here to help.

## HOW TO REACH US

Main phone 973-875-5101

After hours 877-504-6463

Email [info@sussexrec.com](mailto:info@sussexrec.com)

Website [www.sussexrec.com](http://www.sussexrec.com)

## SPOTTING A SCAM

Don't fall victim - Here are a few common scammer tactics



### Pretend to be from SREC

They may spoof our phone number and your caller ID may show our name



### Demand immediate payment

DO NOT pay over the phone, even if they say it's required to avoid immediate disconnection!



### Threaten to shut off power

We will NEVER generate urgent calls like these threatening disconnection

**Suspect a scammer?  
Here's what to do**

1. Hang up the phone
2. Call 973-875-5101 to report it to SREC
3. Alert friends, family, & neighbors to raise awareness!

Lightning was **powering** through the clouds outside. Thanks to **your** planning, their story time, and **life** as you know it, continued inside.



Cummins Connect Series home standby generators

Safeguard against power line failure with a Cummins standby generator. Call your authorized Cummins dealer today so you are prepared for when the next storm arrives.

Powering your life.



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Installing a smart power strip is a quick and easy way to start saving money while making your home more energy efficient. Smart power strips can actually cut power off to save energy since they are able to detect when a device is in standby mode.

Source: energy.gov



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About 90% of the energy used by washing machines goes to heating the water.

Save on energy costs by using cold or warm water.

Source: Energystar.gov



SUMMER

WINTER



PLANT ENERGY SAVINGS

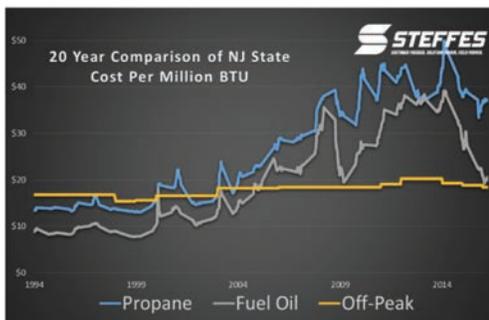
Plant deciduous trees to block heat from the sun in the summer and let sunlight in during the winter.

## It's not magic, it's Electric Thermal Storage Heating

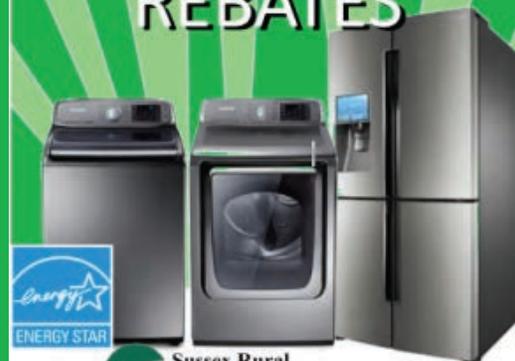
The "magic" of the cost effectiveness of Electric Thermal Storage (ETS) is the ability to store heat during off-peak billing hours for use during higher priced on-peak billing hours.

A variety of furnace sizes are available to fit your home ranging from 19.2kW—45.6kW.

For more information go to [www.sussexrec.com](http://www.sussexrec.com) or call 973.875.5101



## APPLIANCE REBATES



Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
A Teachers Energy Cooperative  
**\$50.00 Rebate for Appliances**  
[www.sussexrec.com/appliance-rebate](http://www.sussexrec.com/appliance-rebate)