



VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

P.O. Box 1049, Dillon, MT 59725-1049
(406) 683-2327 or (800) 221-8271
Web site: www.vec.coop
E-mail: contact@vec.coop

As Simple as Dialing 811

“Call Before You Dig.” You have seen this on TV, newspapers and billboards. The Call Before You Dig campaign has been around for years. Why go to all of these efforts to have people call in to request for utility locates before they dig? Well, digging into underground utilities is extremely dangerous, there are serious financial repercussions and it is the law.

Coming in contact with underground power lines is every bit as dangerous as contacting overhead lines. They can carry the same voltage as overhead lines, and are much harder to identify. Don't take a chance; one wrong decision could be your last.

Digging up an underground power line also has financial consequences. The costs associated with repairing an underground power line becomes the obligation of the person responsible for the damage. Depending on the situation, digging into a power line can get very expensive, very fast.

If you need further persuasion, the following are excerpts from the Montana Law regarding this issue:

Montana Law, Annotated Code 2011, 69-4-502 states: “...an excavator may not make or begin an excavation without first obtaining information concerning the possible location of an underground facility from each public utility, municipal corporation, underground facility owner, or other person having the right to bury underground facilities that is a member of a one-call notification center ...”

Montana Law, Annotated Code 2011, 69-4-503 states: “Before beginning an excavation, the excavator shall notify, through a one-call notification center, all owners of underground facilities in the area of the proposed excavation.”

This applies to everybody:

Montana Law, Annotated Code 2011, 69-4-501 states: “**Excavator**” means a

person conducting the excavation activities. “**Excavation**” means an operation in which earth, rock or other material in the ground is moved, removed or otherwise displaced by means or use of any tools, equipment or explosives. The term includes, but is not limited to, grading, trenching, digging, ditching, drilling, augering, tunneling, scraping, and cable or pipe plowing and driving.

The easiest way to stay safe and avoid unnecessary problems is to call the Utilities Underground Locate Center (UULC) at (800) 424-5555, or you can simply dial 811. You need to make your request two full business days before you plan to dig. When you call, you will be asked a series of questions about your worksite — being prepared greatly speeds up the process.

- Have the following information handy:
- Your name, phone number, company name (if applicable) and mailing address.
 - What type of work is being done.
 - Who the work is being done for.
 - The county and city the work is taking place in.
 - The address or street where the work is taking place.
 - Marking instructions, (*specific instructions as to where the work is taking place. Please use white or pink paint, or white or pink flags, to outline the area you are digging in.*)

Once UULC staff has all the information, they will notify the relevant utilities in your area. Once the utilities are notified, they will dispatch a person to locate their utilities. By making a simple call, you could save time, money and maybe even your life.

Please note that Vigilante Electric Cooperative will only locate wire between the transformer and the meter. We will not locate wire between the meter and the load. This is the responsibility of the member, and will require an electrician.

Trustees

President

Dean Peterson

Vice President

Dean Hanson

Secretary/Treasurer

Sharon Lasich

Tom Helm

Andy Johnson

Don Jones

Allen Martinell

Jim Petersen

Norm Tebay

General Manager

Rollie Miller

Outage Notification Numbers

M-F 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

683-2327 or (800) 221-8271

Dillon

After Hours Mon. - Thurs.

Dan Snellman683-6222

Gary Ferris683-6321

Cody Tarter925-3326

Charles Wharton660-1878

Weekends

683-2327 or (800) 221-8271

Whitehall

After Hours and Weekends

Marty Simons287-3950

Chuck Romerio287-3144

Dake Green871-4184

John Moos266-3605

Townsend

After Hours and Weekends

John Moos266-3605

Justin Bair266-3351

Chase White459-3892

Marty Simons287-3950

Location is Everything

Especially when it comes to power lines

As a service to our membership, we publish safety articles on the dangers of working around electricity in hopes of preventing the loss of life or property. Some of the motivation for these pieces is from driving around our service territory and seeing people engaged in activities that could put them at risk of contacting a power line. One practice we see is placing sheds, farm implements or haystacks under power lines.

Most often, these items are placed on pieces of unproductive land. Sometimes this is done without any thought to what is overhead. As a point of reference, by law, electric utilities cannot build a line over an existing structure because there are too many inherent dangers. People working around or on these structures increase their risk of contacting the overhead line. So the question becomes, if it is not safe to build over a structure, why would it be any safer to put something under the lines? It's not! Plus,

placing a haystack under a power line is positioning a dry fuel source under an object that could ignite it.

Another potential hazard that is all too common is fence lines being placed too close to power poles, or worse, power poles being used as part of the fence. Power lines and fences do not mix. If a power line were to come to rest on a fence, there is the potential for the fence to become energized. Unsuspecting individuals or livestock that come in contact with the fence could be seriously hurt or killed.

There are also concerns for the line workers who have to climb these poles, often in the worst weather and light conditions. They have enough to contend with, without the potential hazards of a fence. If a line worker were to slip



while on the pole, they could be seriously injured or killed if they were to land on the fence or become impaled on a fence post. Fences also can damage the protective gear linemen use to work around high-voltage conductors.

Much of what has been described is out of habit. The problem is, too often it takes a traumatic event for a change of habit to occur. Electricity is very unforgiving, and there may not be a second chance. Do it right the first time. Be conscious of overhead lines and maintain a zone of safety under power lines where nothing is stored or built.

Power of community

Working together to build a brighter tomorrow

When it comes to electric cooperatives, it is more than just working together; it's about the commitment to do so. Your Touchstone Energy cooperative invests time, money and expertise to build the local economy and strengthen relationships with members. Across the nation, co-ops improve their members' quality of life by taking leadership roles in community, development projects, educating the youth, and generously donating time, energy, and resources to schools, charities and community events. Located in the communities they serve, electric cooperatives and their members are working together to build a brighter tomorrow.

With the help of Franklin D. Roosevelt, who established the Rural Electrification Administration in 1935, friends and neighbors banded together to create a new kind of electric utility, where the voice of every person made

a difference. Today, with the same focus on member needs, electric cooperatives are committed to improving the quality of life in their communities, and for the member-owners who live there.

When it comes to working together, Jo Ann Emerson, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, said, "The most special thing about Touchstone Energy cooperatives is how they embrace their local presence, and humanize the relationship between the co-op and the people — the owners — in the homes and businesses they serve."

As a member of a Touchstone Energy co-op, you have a voice. Together they work in harmony. Together we can all build a brighter tomorrow.

Plug in to the power of Vigilante Electric Cooperative's Touchstone Energy Cooperative membership at www.TogetherWeSave.com.

Prescription Discount Tracker

Total Paid Claims YTD	258
Total Savings YTD	\$7,918.73
Total Savings Percentage	38.73%
Apr. paid claims	13
Apr. Savings	\$532.09
Apr. Savings Percentage	39.83%

