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A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS OF OTERO COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OP

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Portable Electric Space Heating



The Hound Days of Winter

Winter is here and it's time for heat in the home for that added comfort. The heating system in your house determines if heat gets to every room. Many heaters do not get heat into all the rooms in the house. When this happens, homeowners usually look for alternatives to get heat into the non-heated rooms. One of the alternatives is looking at portable space heaters. These heaters can provide the heat needed, but can also cost you extra money.

There are two types of portable electric space heaters on the market. These include radiant space heaters and convection (the circulation of air in a room) heaters. These heaters are small and portable and may be used in any room in the house. Radiant heaters are more efficient in small rooms when you will be in the room for a short time. When heating a larger room, a convection heater is more efficient. It will circulate the air and heat the room much quicker.

When using a space heater, it is very important to keep the heaters in an open space away from objects. The majority of house fires caused by appliances are started from portable space heaters. It is also very important to keep children and pets away from any heater. The surfaces on these heaters can be extremely HOT and may cause severe burns. It is also very important not to allow the heater to tip over and come into contact with flammable materials that may cause a fire.

What should you the consumer look for when buying a portable space heater? When purchasing a portable electric space heater it is important to:

- Purchase a newer model portable electric space heater.
- Purchase a radiant portable electric space heater that has a thermostat control for heating smaller rooms.
- Purchase a portable electric space heater that has a thermostat with a fan for larger rooms.
- Determine how much a portable electric space heater will cost to operate.
- Find a level space to place the portable electric space heater to keep away from pets and children.

To determine the cost of operation of each portable space heater purchased, you must determine the wattage of the heater. The most common wattages on these heaters are 1500, 800, and 600watts. The formula to determine the usage of the heaters is:

$$\text{watts} \times 30\text{days} \times \text{number of hours it will run} = \text{total watts}/1000 = \text{total kWh}$$

$$\text{For Example: } 1500 \times 30 \times 12 = 540,000\text{watts}/1000 = 540 \text{ total kWh}$$

In order to determine the cost, the first thing to determine is the price per kilowatt (kWh).

This is done by adding you KWH amount (.096030) to your Purchased Power Cost Adjustment (This is shown on your bill directly below your KWH charge). For this example we are adding the kWh amount of .096030 to the Avg. Purchased Power Cost Adjustment (PPCA) of .011161 (Avg. of 2007 PPCA) to get a total of .107171 for the KWH charge to be used in the calculation.

$$\text{For Example: } 540\text{kWh} \times 0.107171 = \$57.87 \text{ per month}$$

It will cost an extra \$57.87 to operate one portable electric space heater per month. The cost of this heater is based on it running 12 hours per day for 30 days per month.

Portable electric space heaters are convenient for homeowners to use. If you are using or intend to use electric space heaters, you can expect an increase of kWh's used in your home resulting in a higher bill. The above formula will enable you to estimate the cost of space heating. Should you need additional information on Space Heating, please contact the Cooperative office.

Coping with a Power Outage.....

Appliances and electronic equipment are more susceptible to power surges than ever before, thanks to their delicate micro-circuitry and computerized controls. We strive to provide high quality power to our consumers. We install lightning arrestors, fuses and breakers to protect the system from the damaging forces of nature and surges beyond our control, and for public safety. Otero County Electric can't protect the electric system on the consumer's side of the meter. However, you can help protect your own equipment by unplugging it during a power outage and by installing surge protection. Although we work to get the lights back on as fast as possible, there are some steps to take which will make an outage easier to cope with. First of all, leave a couple of lights on to monitor when power is restored. It is possible that the light bulbs may suffer damage, but bulbs are cheaper to replace than other electrical appliances.

To Help Protect Your Appliances:

- Turn off or unplug appliances that come on automatically such as your water heater, water well, heat pumps, air conditioner, refrigerator and freezer. (You may have to turn some appliances off using their individual circuit breaker connected to that particular appliance. This will prevent overloading the power line circuits when power is restored.)
- Unplug sensitive appliances like VCRs, DVDs, computers, TVs, microwaves and answering machines.
- To avoid a fire hazard, turn off any appliance that was in operation when the power loss occurred, such as ovens. Double check to make sure your oven and burners are turned off.
- Finally, set the thermostat on your heat pump, or electric heat to the OFF position.

When the Power Comes Back On:

- Give the electrical system a chance to stabilize by gradually reconnecting the appliances you previously unplugged.
- When the power comes back on, turn on only the essential appliances and wait 10 to 15 minutes before reconnecting the others.
- Refrigerator and Freezer Information:
- Keep doors closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature.
- Refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about 4 hours if it is unopened.
- Freezers that are full will hold temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full) if the door remains closed.
- You can obtain dry or block ice to keep your refrigerator as cold as possible.
- Fifty pounds of dry ice should hold an 18-cubic foot full freezer for 2 days. Plan ahead and know where dry ice and block ice can be purchased.
- Keep your refrigerator temperature at 38 - 40 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Keep your freezer at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or colder.

**If you have any questions please feel free to call:
Clint Gardner - Manager of Member Services
At 505-682-2521**

***Otero County
Electric
Cooperative
will be closed
February 18th
For
Presidents Day***

