



AUGUST 2021

THE WHEAT BELT CONNECTION



UNDERSTANDING POWER SURGES AND BLINKS

By Abby Berry - NRECA's Straight Talk

Have you ever noticed your lights blink during a thunderstorm? Or perhaps you've noticed a blinking microwave clock when you arrive home. When this happens, you've likely experienced a brief disruption to your electric service, which could result from a power surge or blink. While the symptoms of surges and blinks can appear similar, what's happening behind the scenes can be quite different.

What's a power surge?

Power surges are brief overvoltage spikes or disturbances of a power waveform that can damage, degrade or destroy electronic equipment within your home or business. Most electronics are designed to handle small variations in voltage; however, power surges can reach amplitudes of tens of thousands of volts—this can be extremely damaging to your electronic equipment.

Surges can be caused by internal sources, like HVAC systems with variable frequency drives, or external sources, like lightning and damage to power lines and transformers.

Wheat Belt Public Power District encourages all members to install surge protective devices (such as surge protector power strips) to safeguard your sensitive electronics. If you're experiencing frequent surges in your home or business and you

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Editor - Yolanda Hruska

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LUCKY DRAWING

Congratulations to Loren Cole, our June "Lucky Winner"!

Loren has been a Wheat Belt Garden County customer for over 30 years. Loren is a Customer Specialist in the Firearms Department at Cabela's/ Bass Pro. Although his favorite pastime is hunting, he also enjoys all outdoor activities.

Loren has received a \$50.00 credit on his account. If you would like to be included in our next drawing, and avoid the \$5 delinquent fee, please send your payment before the 16th of the month.

For your convenience, we offer several payment options. Please contact us, 308-254-5871/800-261-7114, or visit wheatbelt.com and select the Customer Engagement page for details on payment options.

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Lightning strikes can cause faults (short circuits) on power lines, which can cause your power to blink. Photo Credit: Pat Gaines

believe the cause is internal, contact a qualified electrician to inspect your electrical system.

What's a power blink?

Power blinks are also brief service interruptions, but they're typically caused by a fault (short circuit) on a power line or a protective device that's working in reaction to the fault. Faults can occur through a variety of instances, like squirrels, birds or other small animals contacting an energized power line; tree branches touching a power line; or lightning

and other similar events. In fact, when it comes to power disruptions caused by critters, squirrels reign supreme. In 2019 alone, squirrels were responsible for more than 1,200 outages.



Photo Credit: Carina Hofmeister

Any of the events noted above can cause your power to blink, but you may also experience a brief interruption when protective devices that act like circuit breakers are working to detect the fault. Believe it or not, these brief power blinks caused by protective devices are actually good because that means the equipment is working as it should to prevent a prolonged outage.

Regardless of the cause, Wheat Belt crews will be on their way to inspect the damage and make necessary repairs after a power outage. And you can help too! Any time you experience repeated disruptions to your electric service, please let us know by calling 308-254-5871 or 800-261-7114, twenty-four hours a day. Please have your account number or meter number available.



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ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Tip of the Month

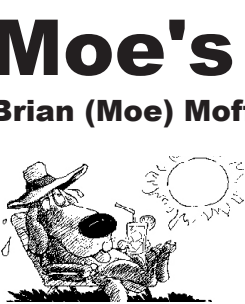
When shopping for new light bulbs, know the difference between lumens and watts. Lumens measure the amount of light produced by the bulb. Watts measure energy consumption. Energy-saving LEDs come in a variety of colors and brightness levels and last 15-25 times longer than incandescent bulbs.

Source: energy.gov



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Farmers: Getting proper rest can make a huge difference in staying safe during harvest

For many farmers, fall requires long days in the field and little rest. The pressure to harvest as much as possible, combined with fatigue and looming deadlines, increases the risk of injury. In fact, most injuries occur during the spring and fall when stress and fatigue are common among farmers.

The safety and health of workers, including making time for sleep, should be a priority when considering a farm's productivity, according to Josie Rudolphi, University of Illinois Extension associate research scientist. "Rushing and cutting corners can lead to injury, which no one has time for, especially during the harvest," Rudolphi says.

Rudolphi grew up on a farm and understands the pressures of harvest season. She says that getting proper rest can make a huge difference in staying safe, but during the time crunch of harvest season, farmers sacrifice sleep to work late into the night.

"Sleep deficiency has been associated with increased injury, reduced reaction time, and reduced concentration," Rudolphi says. "All of which could impact health and safety, as well as productivity."

The demands of harvest are stressful, and a lack of sleep can intensify that and lead to errors in the fields or even on the roads.

To improve sleep, Rudolphi advises farmers to go to bed and wake up at regular times when possible. They can use rainy days to catch up on sleep.

Other sleep health tips include:

- Create a bedroom environment that encourages sleep; keep it quiet, dark and cool.
- Limit electronic device use.

- Avoid large meals, caffeine and alcohol before bedtime.

In addition to improving sleep, managing stress is an important component to injury prevention, health and safety, according to Rudolphi. "By using the 'Four A' Method of avoid (planning ahead), adapt (changing expectations), alter (changing the situation when you can) and accept (acknowledging that a situation is what it is), farmers can successfully manage the stress of long hours and unpredictability," she adds.

For information about safety around electricity, including farm and ranch safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Feeling stressed this harvest season?

WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?

Breakdowns. Long hours. Setbacks. There is no way to predict what harvest will bring.

Have your PLAN in place to manage your stress for a safe and healthy harvest.



Prepare for the season

With preparation, some stress can be avoided. Anticipate the demands of harvest and plan ahead. For example, prep healthy meals, fuel equipment and perform routine maintenance ahead of schedule. What can you do to prepare?



Lean on loved ones

Seeking support from others rather than taking on everything yourself can help reduce stress. Text or call a friend or family member when you need support. Whom can you lean on?



Activate coping mechanisms

Coping mechanisms can help manage stress. They include engaging in physical activity, finding ways to make yourself laugh and carving out time for hobbies. Which coping mechanisms will you use?



Nip negative self-talk

Negative self-talk leads to decreased morale and feelings of hopelessness. When your inner critic nags, be kind to yourself and remember thoughts are not reality. How will you tell your inner critic to take a hike?

Content developed by Josie M. Rudolphi and Courtney Cuthbertson, University of Illinois Extension



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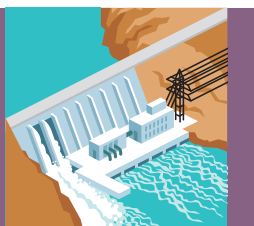


HYDROPOWER WORD SCRAMBLE

You know that it's never safe to mix water and electricity. But did you know that large amounts of flowing water can be used to create electricity? It's called hydropower, and it's made from the movement of water.



Read the facts about hydropower below, then unscramble each **bolded** word. Check your work in the answer key.



1. **YROHD** means "water" in Greek.
2. Water flowing down a **EVRRRI** is used to spin large turbines that help make the hydroelectricity.
3. When the turbines spin, a large **TROAEGREN** spins, which makes the electricity.
4. The amount of water used to generate hydropower is controlled through use of large **MDAS**.
5. Hydropower is a form of **ELNERAEWB** energy.

ANSWER KEY: 1. HYDRO 2. RIVER 3. GENERATOR 4. DAMS 5. RENEWABLE

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