

No game is worth getting struck by lightning

Perhaps you've been a parent, coach or player at an outdoor sporting event in a similar predicament: The clouds roll in and the sky gets dark, but you have finish-game-it-is. After all, it will only take a few more minutes.

Or, not wanting to appear overly cautious or paranoid, you wait for others to give the signal.

This is one situation when finishing the game, match or inning is not worth the risk. Each year, thunderstorms produce an estimated 25 million cloud-to-ground lightning flashes in the United States, each of which is a potential killer, according to the National Weather Service (NWS). Some flashes strike directly under the storm where it is raining. Other times, the flashes reach away from the storm in places where people perceive the lightning threat to be low or nonexistent.

About 30 people are killed by lightning each year and hundreds more are injured, some suffering devastating and permanent neurological injuries. About two-thirds of the deaths are associated with outdoor recreational activities.

The NWS recommends outdoor recreation organizers have an established lightning safety plan and follow it every time inclement weather conditions are present.

As part of the plan, coaches or organizers should establish who will listen to the latest accurate weather forecasts prior to a sporting event. It should also be clear who will make the decision to postpone or cancel if necessary.

The lightning safety guidelines should also address the following, according to the NWS:

- **Once in play, when should the activities be stopped?** The short answer: When you see lightning, hear thunder or the skies look threatening.
- **Where should participants, officials and spectators go for safety?** No place outside is safe. Substantial buildings with wiring and plumbing are ideal. Small outdoor buildings, including dugouts, rain shelters, sheds and pavilions are NOT safe places to seek shelter.
- **When should activities be resumed?** A minimum of 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder. Electrical charges can linger in clouds after a storm has seemingly passed.

- **Who should monitor the weather and make decisions about play?** A level-headed and objective person should be the designated weather and lightning monitor. This should NOT be the coach, umpire or referee. The lightning monitor should know the weather safety guidelines and be empowered by teams, parents, coaches and spectators to make decisions.
- **What should be done if someone is struck by lightning?** Call 911 for immediate medical attention. Victims do not carry an electrical charge. CPR or AED may be needed if the individual's breathing or heart has stopped.

The NWS webpage on lightning safety and outdoor sports activities answers these questions in more detail.

Don't make decisions on when to call the game or match based on personal experience or pressure from others. ■



Don't Let Tragedy Strike

30 Around 30 people are killed each year from lightning strikes.

2/3 of lightning fatalities are associated with outdoor recreational activities.

WAIT 30 minutes ...after the last rumble of thunder before heading back outside.

SEEK SHELTER In a four-sided building or an enclosed hardtop vehicle at the first sight of lightning.

TOP 3 sports-related lightning fatalities
1) Soccer 2) Golf 3) Running

Never swim when lightning is in the area.

10 things to know about power restoration

by Jason Brothen



Jason Brothen

As the general manager of Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC), I'm accustomed to members' questions about power outages and why it can take time to restore power. Given our reliance on electricity, there's simply never a good time to be without it.

This month, I'd like to shed light on our restoration process to help our members understand what may be happening behind the scenes. Here are 10 things you might not know about restoration:

1. **We need you.** When your power goes out, it might be at just your home or a small section of a line. There is a chance we may not know about it, and no one has reported it. We rely on you to let us know if your power is out. If you are out of power, please call 406-488-1602 to report the outage.
2. **Our employees may also be affected.** Before the employees head to work for hours or days, they may need to dig themselves out of a snowbank, move a tree blocking their driveway or start a generator. When you're without power, our people may be, too.
3. **It's a team effort.** Every one of LYREC's employees is working to get your power restored as soon as possible. Our member services representatives are taking your calls, operations are surveying damage, dispatchers are organizing crews and communicators are keeping everyone informed of progress or potential dangers. When your power goes out, we all work together as quickly and safely as possible to get you back to normal.
4. **We assess the situation first.** Every outage is different, and we don't know how dangerous it is or what equipment might need to be replaced. When responding to outages, we first need to see what happened, then figure out what materials we need and develop a plan to fix the problem(s) without compromising electric flow for the rest of our members.

5. **Restoration is normally prioritized by the largest number of members we can restore in the shortest amount of time.** Our crews focus on responding first to public safety issues and critical services. Then, we complete work that impacts the largest number of people first.
6. **Our employees face many dangers.** Besides working around high-voltage electricity, our crews are on alert for weather elements, falling trees and fast-moving cars. (If you ever drive past one of our vehicles, please do so slowly.)
7. **Flickering lights are a good thing.** Some folks mistake flickering lights for outages, but these "blinks" are important, because they indicate our equipment worked and prevented a possible outage likely caused by wayward animals or stray tree limbs on the lines. However, making us aware of the blinks is important.
8. **You need a backup plan.** We do our best to help those who need it, but if you depend on electricity for life support purposes, you must have a backup plan. Remember, we don't always know how long restoration efforts will take and we want to make sure you have a plan to stay safe until the power is restored.
9. **Our employees have to plan – and eat.** If you ever see our trucks congregated for a lunch break while your power is out, know that sometimes our employees huddle in a safe, common area to map their plan for restoring your power. Also, our crews work long hard hours during outages and need to take time for meals, just like everyone else.
10. **Sometimes it's a waiting game.** Our portion of the power grid is connected to other electric utilities, and we maintain positive relationships with power providers interconnected to our system. If our outage is due to an issue from their feed into our system, we must let them do their repairs and be mindful of what they're going through to fix it.

We do our best to avoid power disruptions, but they are inevitable from time to time. If the lights go out, know your co-op team is working as quickly and safely as possible to restore power. If you experience an outage, please let us know by reporting it 24/7 by calling 406-488-1602. ■



Co-op Day at the Fair

Indulge in free root
beer floats at the
Richland County Fair!

Thursday, Aug. 1
4 p.m. until gone



Cool off with a
sweet treat.

Sponsored by your local cooperatives



Discounts offered for Medora vacation



Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative is able to offer its members a discount by being a Touchstone Energy® member. Simply call 1-800-MEDORA-1 and give the discount code of "TOUCH2024" for a 15% discount on all of the following during any night of the season.

THINGS TO DO:

- Medora Musical
- Pitchfork steak fondue
- Bully Pulpit Golf Course
- Gospel Brunch tickets
- Old Town Hall Theater shows

LODGING AT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Elkhorn Quarters
- Badlands Motel
- Rough Riders Hotel
- Medora Campground

*The code is good for reservations over the phone, website or in person.
A green fees discount will be applied at check-in for a tee time at the golf course.*

LYREC attends Career Exploration Day



Last May, Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) Journeyman Lineworkers Jory Bell and Preston Long attended West Side Elementary School's Career Exploration Day. Students were offered a glimpse into the vital role lineworkers have in maintaining and repairing the electric grid.

The lineworkers brought an array of equipment and tools they use daily, along with a bucket truck, digger and electric pickup. The students wasted no time trying on the lineworkers' gear, crawling in the equipment and digging in with their questions.

What started as a simple outreach opportunity quickly transformed into an unforgettable experience for both the lineworkers and the young students. LYREC's goal is for the students to have a newfound appreciation for the hard work and dedication of lineworkers, and perhaps a dream of climbing the poles themselves one day. ■

Congratulations!

The following students have been awarded \$1,000 for entering the Superhero scholarship contest.

• Adriana Beyerle	• Ella Norby
• BayLee Schlothauer	• Lauren Kjos
• Brie Mullin	• Lexi Morlock
• Cloey Eide	• Parvina Eshonqulova
• Dalton Bouchard	• Seth Beyerle
• Drae Nelson	• Taylor McPherson

The recipients must submit proof of college enrollment to scholarships@lyrec.coop by August 1.



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Jory Bell	Apprentice Lineman
Brandon Mueller	Master Electrician
Mike Eberling	Mechanic
Dan Gieser	EMS
Lee Alvstad	Mechanic/EMS
Richard Tremblay	EMS
Bo Kindopp	GIS/Easement Technician
Tom Hall	GIS Specialist
Corey Candee	Chief Information Officer
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Justin King	Warehouse Supervisor
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