

SOUTH CENTRAL SOURCE

MARCH 2025



ENERGYWISE

Use less. Spend less. Do more.

Lawn & Garden Program

Advances in battery technology have come a long way in recent years. More power is now being packed into your lawn and garden equipment.

20% incentive on electric lawn and garden equipment including the following:

- Lawn mowers (riding, walk behind, robotic)
- Chainsaws
- Edgers
- Pruners
- Snow Blowers
- Leaf Blowers
- Tillers
- Trimmers

Guidelines

- Chargers and battery purchases are available for the incentive at the time of initial mower purchase
- Power tools are not included.
- Incentive amount is based on purchase price (installation, taxes and delivery/shipping costs are NOT eligible).
- The completed application form must be signed by the owner and then submitted to the electric utility for processing. Sales receipt(s) or invoice(s) itemizing the lawn and garden tool(s) indicating the type, amount, and purchase date must accompany the incentive application.

Visit www.southcentralppd.com for more information on available incentives.

UTILITY SCAMS IN THIS AGE OF AI

How to spot and avoid fraud

Someone calls claiming to be from your utility company. They say your service will be cut off if you don't pay them immediately. Real utility companies don't do this. But scammers want to scare you into paying before you have time to confirm what they're telling you. And scammers are now using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to craft frauds that are difficult for consumers to detect. Learn how to protect yourself and your family from falling victim to these scammers.

Beware of these common scam tactics

- Disconnection threats: Scammers claim your service will be cut off without immediate payment.
- Caller ID spoofing: Fraudsters use software to make their calls appear legitimate.
- Overpayment claims: They may say you've overpaid and ask for personal or banking information to issue a refund.
- Smishing: Scammers send fake text messages that seem to come from your utility company.
- Phishing attempts: Beware of emails that look like bills; always verify the sender's email before clicking links.

If you have any doubt about the status of your electric service, call South Central Public Power District at 402.225.2351 or 800.557.5254.

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Watch for the following red flags

- High-pressure tactics that demand urgent action.
- Unusual payment method requests (wire transfer, gift cards, reloadable cards or cryptocurrency).
- Poor grammar, misspellings and suspicious email addresses.

AI use enhances utility scams

By leveraging AI-powered techniques, utility scammers can create sophisticated and convincing frauds that are hard for consumers to recognize and avoid.

- AI helps scammers craft convincing emails that appear to be from legitimate utility companies and include the use of company colors and logos.
- Scammers use AI to create realistic-looking utility company websites that are nearly indistinguishable from legitimate ones.
- AI technology can clone the voices of utility company representatives, making phone scams convincing.
- AI analyzes victims' online presence and social media to create highly personalized spam related to your utility services.
- Scammers create geographically targeted online ads that appear when users search for keywords related to their energy bills.
- Scammers use AI to launch large-scale utility scam campaigns quickly and efficiently.

According to Kathy Stokes, AARP Director of Fraud Prevention Programs, "The ability of AI to improve and scale scam tactics is the equivalent of the Industrial Revolution for fraud criminals."

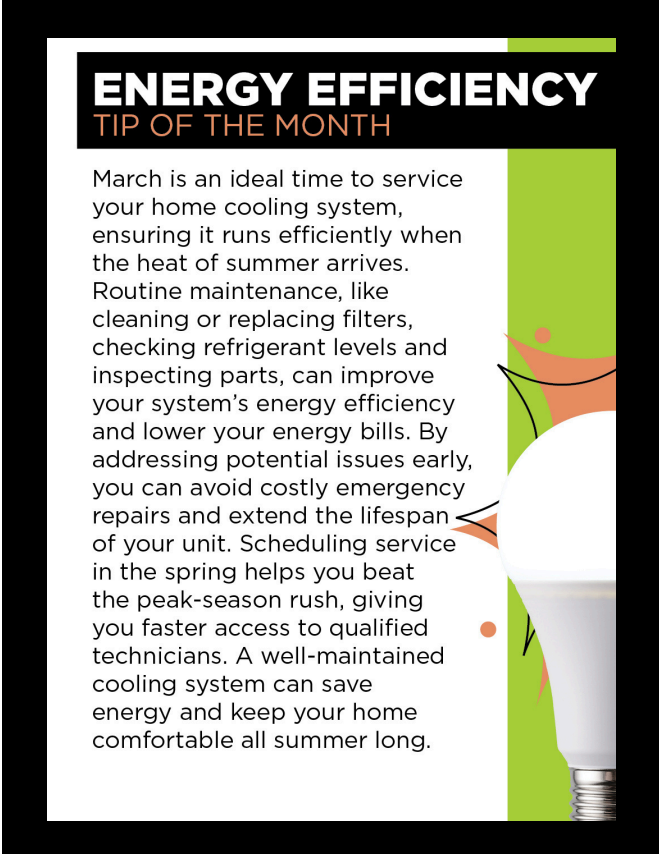
Protect yourself

- Take your time: Don't rush into payments or action.
- Verify any communication by calling your

utility company directly using the number on your bill.

- Never share personal information. Legitimate companies won't ask for sensitive details over the phone.
- If someone claims to be a utility worker, request official identification.

Remember, legitimate utilities will provide multiple notices before disconnection and will not pressure you for immediate payment. If you are in doubt, let your utility company know so they can take proactive measures to both protect you and others from becoming victims. If you suspect a scam, report it to South Central PPD and the FTC at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY
TIP OF THE MONTH

March is an ideal time to service your home cooling system, ensuring it runs efficiently when the heat of summer arrives. Routine maintenance, like cleaning or replacing filters, checking refrigerant levels and inspecting parts, can improve your system's energy efficiency and lower your energy bills. By addressing potential issues early, you can avoid costly emergency repairs and extend the lifespan of your unit. Scheduling service in the spring helps you beat the peak-season rush, giving you faster access to qualified technicians. A well-maintained cooling system can save energy and keep your home comfortable all summer long.



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LIVE POWER OUTAGE MAP
southcentralppd.com



MANAGE YOUR ACCOUNT

DON'T BE MISLED -Contact Your Local Utility Before Installing Wind or Solar Energy

Before installing wind or solar energy systems for your home or business, it's essential to reach out to your local public power utility. While adopting renewable energy can provide long-term savings and environmental benefits, the process of connecting these systems to the grid requires careful planning. Your utility can help you understand whether renewable energy is the right fit for your situation, provide guidance on the installation process, and clarify any technical or regulatory requirements specific to your area.

Discussing the real costs of installation and the potential return on your investment is essential to avoid any unexpected financial surprises. Your utility can explain the upfront costs, ongoing maintenance expenses, and how long

it may take to see a return on your investment. Additionally, understanding how renewable energy will affect your monthly energy bills is key. Utilities can provide insight into net metering, which allows you to earn credits for surplus energy sent back to the grid, and inform you about any local programs, rebates, or tax credits that are available.

Engaging with your local utility early in the process ensures that your renewable energy installation is well-designed and aligns with your goals. This proactive approach helps prevent delays, minimizes the risk of costly errors, and guarantees that your system is compatible with local infrastructure and regulations, leading to a smoother and more successful transition to renewable energy.

Thinking about installing wind or solar power generation?

THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF WIND AND SOLAR INSTALLATION:

- ✓ **DO evaluate** your home energy usage and determine if you can reduce it.
- ✓ **DO contact** your local electric utility to discuss rates, costs, ROI and best practices.
- ✓ **DO have your roof inspected** to see if it can support solar panels.
- ✓ **DO check local ordinances** to see if you can install solar or small wind generation.
- ✓ **DO get multiple price quotes** and compare warranties offered.

- ✗ **DON'T give in** to high-pressure sales tactics.
- ✗ **DON'T assume** your home is a good fit for solar or wind.
- ✗ **DON'T believe the misleading claims** of future utility rate increases.
- ✗ **DON'T believe the over-exaggerated promises** of cost savings and benefits.
- ✗ **DON'T believe the salesperson** if they state they are working on behalf of your local utility.

★ Let's talk you through everything you need to know. Contact us today.

📞 **800.557.5254**

South Central
PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

HAPPY
St. Patrick's
DAY



5 Tips To GO GREEN for St. Patrick's Day

1. Replace your HVAC filter.

These typically need replacing every three months, though factors like pets, climate and system age can affect the timing.

2. Install a smart thermostat.

A smart thermostat offers convenience, savings and efficiency by adjusting the temperature based on your schedule — reducing usage when no one is home.

3. Cut energy use during peak hours.

In spring, peak electricity hours are usually in the evening. Reduce usage by visiting a park, a theater or dining out.

4. Upgrade to energy-efficient appliances.

Look for appliances that are ENERGY STAR-certified, using 10 to 15% less energy and water than standard models, according to Energy.gov.

5. Save energy through rebate programs for solar, battery storage or electric vehicles.

Check with utilities and government programs for rebates and incentives to help make these technologies more accessible.

Learn more at:



SOUTH CENTRAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

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Craig Cox

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The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of South Central Public Power District is held the third Tuesday of each month at 9AM at the District's office in Nelson, Nebraska.

Nelson Office

275 S Main St | Nelson, NE 68961



402.225.2351 or 800.557.5254



Monday - Friday
8 AM - 4:30 PM



www.southcentralppd.com

Power Outages



402.225.2351 or 800.557.5254



Visit the current outage map on our website.



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