



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EMPIRE DISTRICT ENCOURAGES CUSTOMERS TO ENJOY THE OUTDOORS THIS SUMMER AND STAY SAFE AROUND ELECTRICITY

JOPLIN, MO – May 24, 2016 – The month of May is National Electrical Safety Month. It's also the time of year many people begin spending more time enjoying the outdoors. As you head out to trim hedges, plant trees, clean the pool or work on home improvements, remember to stay safe around electricity.

Ladder safety

- Observe the "10-foot rule." Keep ladders at least 10 feet from power lines, including all parts of your body and anything you are holding in your hands.
- Know where the power lines are located when carrying your ladder. Carry in the horizontal position, parallel to the horizon, instead of upright where it could catch on overhead wires.
- Make sure that, should the ladder fall from its upright position, it would clear any nearby electrical lines. Take extra care to "plant" or secure the ladder in place before you climb it.
- When working with long items on a ladder, such as gutters, antennas, pipes or conduit, be very careful not to place them where they could come into contact with energized wires. Remember the 10-foot rule.

Swimming Pools

- Be sure all electrical equipment for your swimming pool is properly installed and grounded. Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) should be installed on electrical equipment. Should a fault occur in the equipment, the GFCI instantly cuts the power, reducing the likelihood of serious electric shock.
- Before installing a new pool, take note of power line locations and always observe the 10-foot rule when using skimmers and cleaning equipment with long handles.
- Avoid using electrical equipment near the pool.

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Electrical tools

- If you plan to use an electric lawn mower, hedge trimmer or weed eater, be sure to keep the cord behind you and away from blades and moving parts. Be careful not to cut or damage the cord.
- Always unplug electrical equipment if you meet with an obstruction. Free obstructions only after you've disconnected power.
- Keep tools in good operating condition, inspect their grounding connections frequently, and follow manufacturer's operating instructions.

Tree Trimming

- Never trim trees near power lines! If you need assistance trimming near your service wire, call us. We will disconnect it free of charge to allow you or your contractor to work safely. Please call at least 48 hours in advance.

General tips

- Protect outdoor electrical outlets with weatherproof covers and GFCIs.
- Never operate electrical equipment on a wet surface or in the rain.
- Never enter a flooded basement to turn off electricity. First, call your local fire department, then call Empire.
- If your outdoor project involves digging, make sure to call 811 from any state to have your underground utilities located. Call at least three, but not more than ten, working days before beginning your project.

Downed Lines

- Stay away from power lines. They are bare wires and not insulated. Downed power lines may appear to be harmless, but could be energized and dangerous.
- If a person or object is in contact with a power line, don't touch the person, object or line. The electric current could flow through to you. Call 911 and Empire immediately.
- If your vehicle is in contact with a power line, stay inside the car. Warn others not to touch the car or the power line.
- If you must leave your vehicle, jump clear to avoid being in contact with the car and the ground at the same time.

For more safety information, visit us online at www.empiredistrict.com.

Based in Joplin, Missouri, The Empire District Electric Company (NYSE: EDE) is an investor-owned, regulated utility providing electric, natural gas (through its wholly owned subsidiary The Empire District Gas Company), and water service, with approximately 218,000 customers in Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. A subsidiary of the Company also provides fiber optic services.

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