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WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* NEWS

August 2026



**Richland Electric
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

FRESH FLOWER
FIELDS AND FARMS

A LEGACY OF INDEPENDENCE

IT ALL STARTS WITH "WHY?"

WATERMELON RECIPES





YES, IT'S SAFE TO CHARGE YOUR ELECTRIC VEHICLE IN THE RAIN



Richland Electric Cooperative

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While it's normally a bad idea to stand on a wet surface and plug something in, electric vehicles are built to do just that.

With electric vehicles growing in popularity, people are curious about charging in inclement weather, says Thomas Bruhl, a member of the board of directors for Safe Electricity, a part of University of Illinois Extension.

"My car sits outside year round," says Bruhl, who owns an electric vehicle and is the electric utility supervisor for the city of Naperville. "It can be pouring rain while it's charging and sometimes I have to brush snow off the charger before I unplug. All of those conditions are suitable for the factory charger or a quality after-market charger."

Electric vehicles are powered by an electric motor instead of an internal combustion engine. The battery that powers the motor is charged with a dedicated plug-in cord that connects it to a charging station or regular wall outlet.

"When using a quality charging device, there generally are no safety related issues as long as the plug is not sitting in a puddle of water or the charging port on the car is packed with snow," Bruhl says.

The charging equipment is designed to be insulated and waterproofed and undergoes testing by the Society of Automotive Engineers for almost any weather condition, with the exception being extreme weather conditions such as floods and hurricanes, according to Safe Electricity.

When it's wet outside, Bruhl says the only area of concern is not where the plug meets the car, but where the charging cord plugs into an outlet or an extension cord, though Bruhl suggests that the use of extension cords come with its own set of risks.

"People could get into trouble if they're plugging the charging cord into an extension cord," Bruhl says. "You want to make sure that all cords are appropriate for the use, are in good working order, and that connections are not in water."

Safe Electricity recommends that electric vehicle owners always follow manufacturer instructions and check charging equipment before using it.

SAFETY FIRST WITH HOME CHARGING STATIONS

Installing an electric vehicle (EV) Level 2 charger is not a do-it-yourself project. It is important to have a charging station installed by a specialized licensed contractor. This will help protect the integrity of your EV and your home's wiring.

HERE ARE SOME BASIC SAFETY TIPS:

- ⚡ Read and follow the car manufacturer's instructions.
- ⚡ Use charging equipment that is sold or endorsed by the EV manufacturer.
- ⚡ To prevent a home fire or other hazards, have the charger installed by a licensed contractor.

PROFESSIONAL INSTALLATION IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

- ⚡ An inadequate power supply can cause an electrical circuit overload.
- ⚡ The overload can cause your charger to overheat, harming your charging device and wiring.
- ⚡ The excess heat from a circuit overload can cause an electrical fire.

A LICENSED CONTRACTOR / ELECTRICIAN WILL:

- ⚡ Ensure the Level 2 charger is wired safely and properly.
- ⚡ Assess your home's electrical system to ensure it can handle the charger's load.

AFTER YOUR CHARGER IS INSTALLED:

- ⚡ Keep charging components out of children's reach.
- ⚡ Inspect charging equipment regularly for signs of wear and tear.

Notify your electric utility before having a Level 2 charger installed. Some utilities offer special rates, rebates and loan options.

Safe Electricity.org



GRILLING: A DELICIOUS AND ENERGY-FRIENDLY OPTION FOR COOKING

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A SIZZLING GRILL ON A SUMMER DAY

Grilling and America go together like hot dogs, baseball, and apple pie. But guess what? Grilling not only satisfies our cravings for great food but also helps preserve the environment. So, let's fire up the grill, embrace the great outdoors, and save energy this summer.

THE COST OF STAYING COOL

As refreshing as it is to feel the cool breeze of an air conditioner (AC) on a hot summer day, its energy consumption can be hefty. Depending on the model, it can consume as much energy as a marathon runner (and run almost non-stop), using anywhere from 0.48 to 5.14 kWh per hour. That is enough to make anyone break a sweat.

Did you know that millions of people add to their AC's energy consumption without realizing it? How? By opening the oven door while cooking. According to the book "Bakewise" by Shirley O. Corriher, an oven can lose up to 150 degrees within 30 seconds. Where does all that heat go? You guessed it —

right into your home. Plus, even with the door closed, your oven still radiates heat into your home since it has nowhere else to go.

THE SOLUTION: GRILLING

If you want to maintain a cool vibe and stop fighting your own cooling system, move your cooking outdoors to the grill. This perfect summer solution keeps all that intense heat outside, ensuring your kitchen stays comfortable while instantly reducing your home's energy demands and lowering your utility bills. Ditching the indoor stove means your air conditioner doesn't have to work double-time just to counteract your dinner preparations, keeping your hard-earned cash in your wallet.

Grills reach a toasty 375 degrees in just 5 minutes, compared to the oven's sluggish 20-minute warm-up. This rapid preheating cuts your total kitchen time in half, meaning you can spend less time sweating over a hot appliance and more time enjoying the beautiful weather. You will be laughing all the way to the butcher shop with the time and money you save all season long.



TIPS FOR SAFE GRILLING

- Keep your grill at least 10 feet from any buildings or structures.
- Make sure your grill is on a flat, steady surface.
- Stay close. Never leave your grill unattended while preheating, cooking or cooling down.
- Dress for success. Avoid loose or long clothing that can catch fire.
- Keep a water spray bottle beside your grill to tackle any little flames that flare up quickly.
- Keep your cool with a fire extinguisher nearby.

KEEPING YOUR GRILL CLEAN

Grills should undergo deep cleaning once or twice per year. Follow these steps to keep your gas grill in prime condition all season long:

- Burn away buildup: Turn on the grill, close the lid, and set the heat to maximum for at least 30 minutes. This process will eliminate any remaining grease or food debris.
- Scrub it clean: In a bowl, mix warm water with soap and dip a wire brush into the mixture. Scrub the grates to remove any carbon buildup.
- Let it cool: Allow the grill to cool down completely before storing it. Now your grill is ready for your next barbecue feast.
- Regular maintenance: In between uses, preheat your grill and then scrape it off with a wire-bristled brush before adding food.

HAPPY GRILL, HAPPY LIFE

In addition to keeping it clean, it is also important to regularly check the propane tank and replace it if necessary. Inspect the hoses and connections for any leaks or damage. Make sure the burners are free of debris and functioning properly. Finally, covering your grill when not in use can help protect it from the elements and prolong its lifespan.

Menu options are truly endless when it comes to grilling. Grab your apron, fire up the grill, and get ready to impress your friends and family with your grilling skills while saving energy— and keeping your kitchen cool.

Barbecued Pork Steaks

4 STEAKS ■ COOK TIME: 20-21 MINUTES

FROM THE SEPTEMBER 2018 WECN

INGREDIENTS

- 4 pork blade steaks 1 to 1- 1/4 inches thick
- 1/2 cup barbecue sauce
- 1/3 cup honey
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp garlic salt
- 1/2 tsp mustard

DIRECTIONS

- Place steaks on grill about 4 inches above medium-low heat.
- Cook for approximately 8 minutes on each side.
- In a small bowl, stir together remaining ingredients.
- Brush steaks with sauce and continue cooking for an additional 5 minutes, turning and brushing with sauce.

STAY OUT of deep water!

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STAY CLEAR, STAY ALIVE

Staying out of deep water during storm season is vital because flash floods and rising waters create invisible, lethal currents. Turbulent deep water easily conceals dangerous hazards like submerged structural debris, open drainage manholes, and snapped live power lines capable of electrocuting swimmers instantly. Furthermore, these waters are heavily contaminated with raw sewage, chemical runoff, and sharp objects. Strong undercurrents can instantly sweep away adults or vehicles. Because emergency services face extreme limitations during severe weather, rescue operations are frequently delayed. Avoiding deep water entirely ensures you stay safe from drowning, severe injuries, and toxic biological infections when flash floods strike.



REC SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

HELP US STOCK THE CLASSROOMS

Together, let's set our kids up for a great school year!

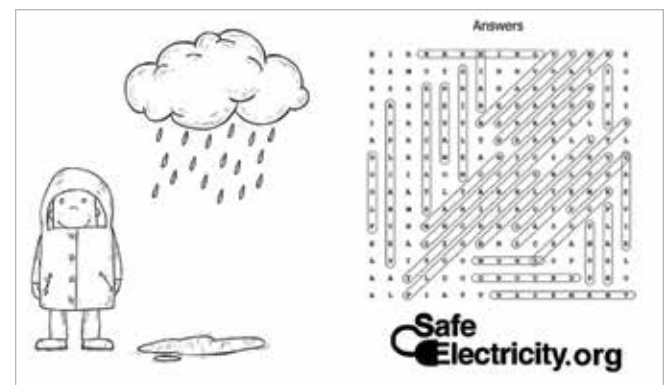
NOW THROUGH AUGUST 28TH

Drop off donations at REC
30 E. Robb Rd, Richland Center

Donations will be distributed between local schools

Richland Electric Cooperative
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OUR SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE IS OFFICIALLY UNDERWAY, AND WE NEED YOUR COMMUNITY SUPPORT TO HELP LOCAL STUDENTS SUCCEED! WE ARE COLLECTING UNUSED ITEMS LIKE BACKPACKS, LUNCH BOXES, CALCULATORS, PENCILS, BLUE OR BLACK INK PENS, AND SPIRAL NOTEBOOKS. OTHER ESSENTIALS INCLUDE CRAYONS, WASHABLE MARKERS, GLUE STICKS, PINK ERASERS, COLORED PENCILS, AND POCKET FOLDERS. YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS ENSURE EVERY CHILD ENTERS THE CLASSROOM CONFIDENT, PREPARED, AND FULLY EQUIPPED WITH THE TOOLS NECESSARY FOR A SUCCESSFUL ACADEMIC YEAR.



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