



**Western Massachusetts  
Electric**

**A Northeast Utilities Company**

MAY 2011

# Protect Your Family from Electrical Hazards

May is National Electrical Safety Month and a great time to boost your safety knowledge. To help you prepare for spring cleaning, yard work and the summer storm season, we have compiled tips for you. Read inside and share the information with your family to make sure that your summer gets off to a safe start!

## Wires

A live power line can cause shock or death, even if you do not touch it. If you come across downed wires, treat them as live and keep a distance of at least 10 feet. Call WMECo at 413.781.4300 (within the Springfield calling



area) or at 1.877.OK.WMECo (877.659.6326). If you are in a vehicle that is near or touching wires, stay in the vehicle and instruct others not to come closer. Ask someone to call 911 right away.

## Generators

Make sure that a new generator is properly installed by a licensed electrician. An improperly installed generator is dangerous – it can cause a house fire, and can put our workers at risk of electrocution if electricity back-feeds into our lines. Generator exhaust is deadly, so never use one indoors.



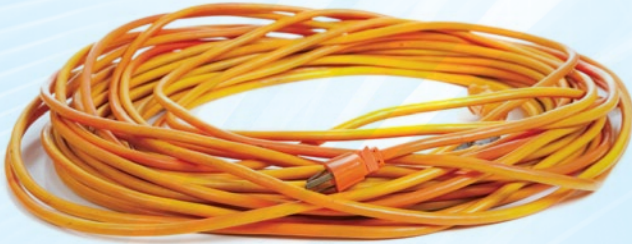
## Digging

Digging can be dangerous if you don't first check for underground lines. The depth of underground lines varies, so every digging job – even a small job, like planting shrubs – requires a call. Digging without checking can disrupt electric service to an entire neighborhood, and can even be deadly. To know what's below, call Dig Safe before each job at 888.344.7233 or dial 811.



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

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### Tools

Inspect all electrical tools for frayed cords, broken plugs and cracked sockets before each use. When using an electrical appliance outdoors, be sure it is plugged in to an outlet that has a weatherproof cover and a ground fault circuit interrupter. Never use electrical appliances near a pool or other wet surface.

### Landscaping

Always survey your surroundings when working outside. Keep ladders (even wooden ones, as they can conduct electricity) away from power lines when cleaning gutters, painting, or siding your home. Always carefully check trees and shrubs where electric wires may be concealed.

### Fun and Play

Inform your kids about electrical safety. Don't let children climb utility poles, towers, metal pad-mounted transformers, or trees near power lines. Call WMECo for help if a pet or a child's toy strays into a substation or onto a pole.

### Weathering a Storm

When summer storms hit western Massachusetts, WMECo is prepared. We've been monitoring the weather and getting our crews, trucks and equipment ready to respond. After each storm, we patrol affected areas and assess damage to prioritize work. We restore safety to dangerous areas and respond to outages in order of severity, addressing vital facilities like hospitals, fire and police stations, shelters, and those for water and sewage treatment. Before we can restore service to your home or business, we must first repair all damage to substations, main electric lines and wires that feed power to neighborhoods. Ultimately, our crews go street by street – and house by house – to restore service. We keep working until every home and business has electricity again.

