



DIYers should call a pro for electrical repairs

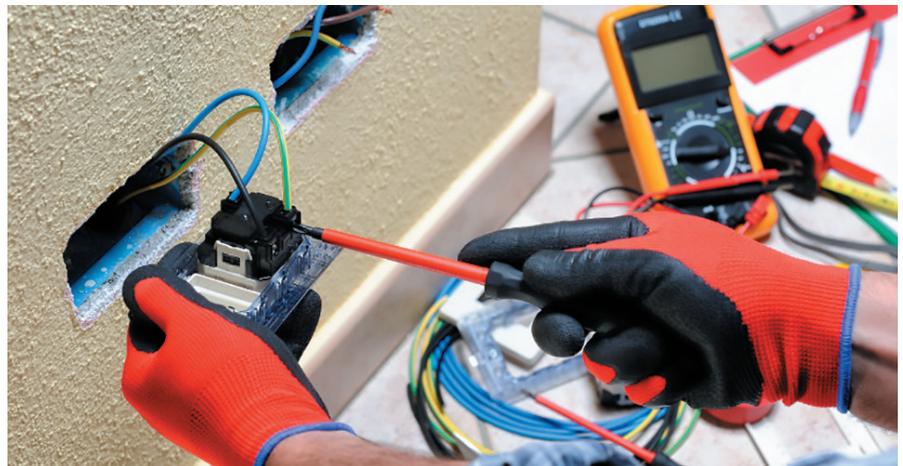
Home improvement TV shows make household repairs look easy. But when it comes to electrical repairs, DIYers should move over and make room for a pro.

Working with electricity is risky business. Anyone who tinkers with wiring or circuits could suffer electrocution or shock, or could start a fire. High-voltage equipment is especially dangerous to work on, even for professionals.

So even if it seems that the talented DIYer in your home has the skills to fix just about anything, he or she should not take chances with electrical repairs.

Licensed electricians are trained not only in the skills they need to work with electrical circuits and components, but in how to stay safe during the job, how to adhere to electrical codes and how to prevent fires. They also know which permits are legally required to do the work.

Homeowners also should consider



the following before attempting to do their own electrical repairs:

- Some homeowner's insurance policies do not cover fires that start as a result of a DIY electrical repair gone wrong.
- Electrical work requiring city or county permits can result in fines for a DIYer who does not obtain those permits.
- Selling a home after electrical

work has been done by a DIYer can be a challenge. Potential buyers usually hire home inspectors, who could flag faulty repairs and force the homeowner to pay for a professional do-over.

- Even when you hire a professional electrician to work in your home, insist on a license, proper permit and an inspection.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Don't keep your refrigerator too cold. The Department of Energy recommends a temperature setting of 35 to 38 degrees for the fresh food compartment and zero degrees for the freezer. Make sure the refrigerator doors are sealed airtight to maximize efficiency.

—Source: energy.gov



Utility notification requirements for contractors, farmers, well drillers and landowners

Contractors and landowners have substantial compliance responsibility when working near an electric utility's underground and overhead distribution power lines. Georgia law and Sumter EMC regulations require contractors and landowners to contact Georgia 811 or, in some cases, Sumter EMC before working near power lines.

Sumter EMC hopes to avoid personal injuries, unnecessary power outages and line damage associated with accidents involving its electric distribution facilities. Contractors can avoid substantial equipment damage and repair costs, as well as personal injuries to their employees, if they abide by these requirements.

These regulations apply to contractors, well drillers, farmers, landowners and others who may have a personal business interest in work performed near power lines. While the following rules address overhead power lines, Georgia law requires that anyone digging in Georgia must contact Georgia 811 at least three days before construction begins, so utility companies can be contacted to mark underground facilities.

High Voltage Safety Act

The High Voltage Safety Act became law in Georgia on July 1, 1992. This act requires individuals performing work within 10 feet of overhead high-voltage electric power lines to notify Georgia 811 during its regular business hours at least 72 hours prior to beginning the work (excluding weekends and holidays).

Georgia 811 will then contact the owner of the power lines to take appropriate safety measures

to prevent injuries, property damage and interruptions of utility service resulting from accidental or inadvertent contact with high-voltage electric lines. Failure to call Georgia 811 constitutes a violation of the law and can result in fines and penalties, in addition to liability for repair of damages.

Contractors are encouraged to become fully familiar with the details of the High Voltage Safety Act. Information is available directly from Georgia 811. Use the same telephone number for notifications or contact them at their website.

Georgia 811
Statewide: 811
Nationwide: 811
www.gaupc.com

Special notice to farmers

Modern farm equipment can be raised or lowered to allow for harvesting greater amounts with fewer delays. Use of this equipment requires that you check fields and roads where your equipment may come within 10 feet of overhead power lines.

The power lines were installed to comply with the National Electrical Safety Code clearance guidelines at the time of construction. If any part of your equipment will be within 10 feet of overhead power lines, you must notify Georgia 811 at least 72 hours before you work under the power lines.

Wells and pumps

Both the well driller and the landowner bear responsibility to notify Georgia 811 when any equipment or materials will be within 10 feet of overhead high-voltage power lines. For safety reasons, installation of wells and well pumps at distances closer than 30 feet from any overhead

power line should generally be avoided, but in locations where the options for well placement are limited, Sumter EMC will help determine the minimum clearance requirements, as specified in the National Electrical Safety Code.

Minimum clearance requirements for the location of wells and well pumps vary according to the line voltage and certain site-specific attributes, and Sumter EMC should be consulted to determine the appropriate minimum recommended distance. Clearance requirements vary with the voltage of the power line, whether or not the line is insulated, the height of the line above ground, the distance to poles that support the line and other local factors that determine where a drilling rig will be stationed for installation and future maintenance or pump replacement activities.

A Sumter EMC representative will meet with the well driller and/or landowner to determine the minimum acceptable distance if the desired pump location is closer than 30 feet from an overhead line.

Easements

Sumter EMC's Service Rules and Regulations require the contractor to notify Sumter EMC directly if proposed work and/or construction will be performed inside the utility's easement. In most cases, the easement extends 20 feet on each side of the power line. Sumter EMC will provide the necessary protection to avoid hazards. Again, consideration should be given to providing plenty of time to respond.

Call Sumter EMC's Engineering Department at (229) 924-8041 or (800) 342-6978 and ask to speak with a representative.

Pandemic calls for extra spring cleaning

After a long winter of quarantining, homeschooling and teleworking while everyone was at home full time, it's time for the mother of all spring cleanings. More people at home often equals more dirt, grime, dust, fingerprints and stains.

While you're scrubbing the COVID-19 pandemic out of your house, keep energy efficiency in mind. Here are six items to clean that could help your appliances, lighting and air conditioning system operate more efficiently—and save you money on energy bills.



- 1. Flip the switch.** Ceiling fans' blades should rotate counterclockwise during warm weather to push cool air down and make rooms feel more comfortable. They should be dust-free; climb a ladder and clean the blades on the top and bottom so they don't knock dirt into the air as they spin.
- 2. Clean air conditioner vents.** They're a catch-all for lint, pet hair, dust and dirt, which can block the air that's trying to flow in and out of them.
- 3. Caulk around windows, doors and electrical and cable outlets on the inside of outside walls.** Cool air can escape through those tiny openings in the summer and find its way into the house during winter.
- 4. Wash your windows.** Even a thin film of dust and dirt on the inside or outside of glass panes can block sunlight from warming a room in the spring.
- 5. Call a service pro.** Your cooling system needs attention from an HVAC tech once every spring to prevent a breakdown once the weather gets hot.
- 6. Dust electronics.** Computers, printers, lightbulbs, appliances—anything that you plug in—sit still enough to collect a lot of dust. Dust can prevent them from operating efficiently.



Hasselback Potato Gratin

Recipe courtesy of Georgia Grown

- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1/2 cup half-and-half
- 8 ounces finely grated Swiss cheese, divided
- 2 ounces finely grated fresh Parmesan cheese, divided
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 7 to 8 medium Russet potatoes, peeled



GEORGIA GROWN

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

In a large bowl, combine cream, half-and-half, half of the Swiss cheese, half of the Parmesan cheese, Dijon mustard, Worcestershire sauce, thyme and salt and pepper.

Slice potatoes into 1/4-inch slices. Toss potato slices in cream mixture until all slices are coated. Carefully make stacks of potatoes then arrange them vertically in a baking dish so that the thin edges of potatoes face up. Pour remaining cream mixture over the potatoes.

Cover baking dish with foil and bake 45 minutes. Remove foil and bake an additional 15 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Sprinkle with remaining Swiss and Parmesan cheeses. Bake an additional 10 minutes or until cheese is golden. *Serves 8-10.*

Sumter EMC offers many bill payment options

By mail or in person

Members who receive a paper bill via U.S. Mail may use the convenient reply envelope enclosed in their monthly bill. Bills may also be paid in person at any of our offices in Americus, Leesburg or Cusseta. Members may utilize our convenient drive-thru during normal business hours or our night drop for payments made outside of those hours.

Sumter EMC also has partnered with the following local businesses to accept current monthly bill payments. *Please note these locations do not accept late or overdue payments.*

Citizens Bank — 534 Washington St.,
Preston GA

Bank of Dawson — 209 N. Main St.,
Dawson GA

U-Save-It-Pharmacy — 676 Alston St.,
Richland GA

Go mobile! Utilize the Sumter EMC app

Our Sumter EMC app offers many of the same services available by calling or visiting our office. With our free mobile app, you can manage your account instantly whether you're at home or on the go.

With fast, secure access you can make payments, report an outage, view your bill and account balance, schedule alerts and reminders and receive push notifications. Just search for Sumter



EMC in the Apple App Store and Google Play.

Automated telephone payments

Our automated payment line is available 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Call (800) 342-6978 anytime to make a payment over the phone.

Sumter EMC website

Setting up access to our online payment portal is easy by visiting our website, www.sumteremc.com. Our online bill viewing/payment services enable you to view your latest bill as well as your electricity use history, previous balances and more—submit changes of address, telephone, etc.; contact us with comments, problems, suggestions and more; use your credit/debit card to pay your bill or write

an electronic check; and post your payment immediately to avoid late charges.

Bank draft

Have your monthly bill payment automatically deducted from your bank account on the third of the month or the next business day, saving you time and money. It's the same convenient process you may already use for a car loan, insurance premium or other monthly payment.

The amount of your bill will be automatically deducted from your bank account on the third of the month or the next business day. Enrolling in bank draft is easy! Visit the payment options page located under the account information tab on the cooperative's website, www.sumteremc.com.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME REMINDER

Don't forget to spring forward on March 14!
Set your clocks forward by one hour.

