



# CENTRAL ELECTRIC POWER ASSOCIATION

*A tradition of dependable, hometown service since 1937*

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## KNOW THE SIGNS of a SCAM

It's no secret that consumers with a water, gas, or electricity connection have long been targets for utility scams, but fraudsters have changed their tactics since the COVID-19 pandemic. As consumers became more reliant on technology for work, school, and commerce, scammers noted these shifts and adapted their tactics to this changed environment.

Imposter scams are the number one type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission. While scam artists may come to your door posing as a utility worker who works for the "power company," in today's more connected world, attempts are more likely to come through an electronic device, via email, phone, or text.

### Common Types of Scams

A scammer may claim you are overdue on your electric bill and threaten to disconnect your service if you don't pay immediately. Whether this is done in-person, by phone, text, or email, the scammers want to scare you into immediate payment so you don't have time to think clearly.

If this happens over the phone, simply hang up. If you're concerned about your bill, call us at 601-267-5671. Our phone number can also be found on your monthly bill and on our website, [centralepa.com](http://centralepa.com). If the scam is by email or text, delete it before taking any action. If you're unsure, you can always contact us at 601-267-5671, or use the CEPA app to check the status of your account. Remember, Central Electric will never attempt to demand immediate payment after just one notice.

Some scammers may falsely claim you have been overcharged on your bill and say they want to give a refund. It sounds easy. All you have to do is click or press a button to initiate the process. If you proceed, you will be prompted to provide banking or other personal information. Instead of money going into your bank account, the scammers can drain your account and use personal information such as a social security number for identity theft.

If this "refund" scam happens over the phone, just hang up and block the phone number to prevent future robocalls. If this scam attempt occurs via email (known as a "phishing" attempt) or by text ("smishing"), do not click any links. Instead, delete it, and if possible, block the sender. If you do overpay on your energy bill, Central Electric will automatically apply the credit to your next billing cycle. When in doubt, contact us.

### Defend Yourself Against Scams

Be wary of call or texts from unknown numbers. Be suspicious of an unknown person claiming to be a utility worker who requests banking or other personal information.

Never let anyone into your home that you don't know unless you have a scheduled appointment or reported a problem. Central Electric employees wear uniforms and carry ID badges. When we perform work on our members' property or come into your home, our employees are professionals and will always identify themselves.

We want to help protect our community against utility scams, and you can help create the first line of defense. Please report any potential scams to us so we can spread the word to prevent others in the community from falling victim.

## HAPPY Independence DAY JULY 4TH

Our employees will observe Independence Day and our offices will be closed Monday, July 4, for the holiday.

To report an outage, please visit [www.centralepa.com](http://www.centralepa.com) and click on **Report An Outage**, call **601-267-3043**, or text the word **OUT** to **866-846-5671** if you are enrolled in the outage texting service. A dispatcher is on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

# PLANNING A REMODEL?

## Timing is everything

by Miranda Boutelle

Remodeling is a great opportunity to take care of energy efficiency improvements by adding them to your scope of work. If your home is already under construction, take the extra step to make it more efficient. Planning for efficiency is the first step. Look at the scope of your remodeling project to see what energy efficiency upgrades you can add. There may be cost savings and convenience in tackling both at once.

### Kitchen Remodel

If your kitchen remodel includes new appliances, buy ENERGY STAR®-rated models. ENERGY STAR® refrigerators are about 9% more efficient than standard models, and ENERGY STAR® dishwashers save both energy and water.

As for kitchen faucets, there are options available with multiple flow-rate settings. You can save water by using a lower flow rate on your faucet when washing dishes, vegetables or your hands, but you can change the setting to quickly fill a pot for cooking.

### Basement Remodel

This is where I find myself right now. Our basement has gone from a wide-open space with concrete walls to a nearly completed living space with a den, two bedrooms, a bathroom, and a laundry room.

We air sealed and insulated the sill plate and rim joist — the framing between the concrete foundation and the main level floor. We built and insulated walls around the basement's perimeter, ensuring a cozy living space and a more comfortable home.

We upgraded our electric storage water heater to a hybrid — or heat pump — water heater, which is 70% more efficient than a standard electric model.

Also, we ran power for an electric vehicle charger while the walls were open. It is much less expensive to run the power supply while you have access.

### Bathroom Remodel

If you plan to remodel your bathroom, include a high-performance showerhead. Look for the WaterSense logo for showerheads, faucets and toilets, which ensures the product meets performance and water use standards.

Check the fine print on your existing equipment to see how much you can save. The gallons per minute (GPM) is usually printed on showerheads and faucet aerators and the gallons per flush (GPF) is usually printed on toilets.

High-performance showerheads and faucet aerators conserve water and save energy used to heat water. Using less water can lower your water bill or increase your septic system's lifespan.



### New Siding or Exterior Paint

The best time to make sure your wall insulation is adequate — or to see if you have wall insulation at all — is when you replace your siding or paint the exterior of your home.

Wall insulation saves on energy costs, makes your home more comfortable and reduces outside noise.

Batt insulation, spray foam or foam board are good options if you are removing the siding. If you are painting, you can have a contractor blow insulation into the wall cavities through holes cut into the siding or from inside the house. The holes are then plugged and prepped for paint.

### Attic Insulation

Often, remodeling requires work in the attic for new lighting or venting bath or kitchen fans. During any project that takes you into the attic, check insulation levels. Work in the attic can negatively impact attic insulation by crushing it or removing it to access work areas.

If more insulation is needed, air seal and check ventilation. Also, make sure all bath and kitchen fans vent to the exterior of the house.

A little planning during a remodel can go a long way toward improving your home's energy efficiency. Remember: it's more difficult and more expensive to go back and tackle energy efficiency projects after your space is finished.

*Miranda Boutelle is the director of operations and customer engagement at Efficiency Services Group in Oregon, a cooperatively owned energy efficiency company*