



WHAT IS THIS FACILITY CHARGE ON MY BILL?

Commonly asked question at OEC

The facility charge covers the basic cost of bringing electricity to each account location. It covers expenses the cooperative incurs regardless of how much electricity is sold. These costs are reviewed periodically to ensure that all essential expenses are covered.

The facility charge covers things such as:

- Substation equipment and property;
- Trucks and equipment;
- Wire, transformers, meters, and power poles needed to build and maintain the electric distribution system.

All members benefit from having reliable electric service available when they need it, and the facility charge ensures that all members pay their fair share of the basic costs. Some of our members use a lot of electricity all year long, and some may use electricity only one or two months per year. Whether

you use a lot or a little, the cost of getting electric power to your home remains the same.

OEC has not raised its facility charge since 2014. The current facility charge is \$21.95 for residential and farm service. (170200) Seasonal and non residential service facility charge is \$22.45. Commercial, Irrigation, Time-of-Use and all other services have their own rates and facility charges.

Your monthly investment of the facility charge ensures you have access to safe, reliable, and affordable power when you need it. We appreciate and value the investment that you make in the co-op each month, and we strive to use that investment wisely for the benefit of all members of our community.

If you have any questions regarding the facility charge, or other charges on your bill, please feel free to contact our office at 920-846-2816.



SAFETY FOR SENIORS AT HOME



**Fall
Detection
Buttons
Available!**

MainStreet Messenger allows seniors to be safe while being independent and living at home.

- You're never really alone with this personal emergency response program
 - Help is only moments away with push of a button
 - Installation within days

PEACE OF MIND FOR ONLY A DOLLAR A DAY!



(920) 846-2816

Serving parts of Oconto, Marinette & Shawano Counties

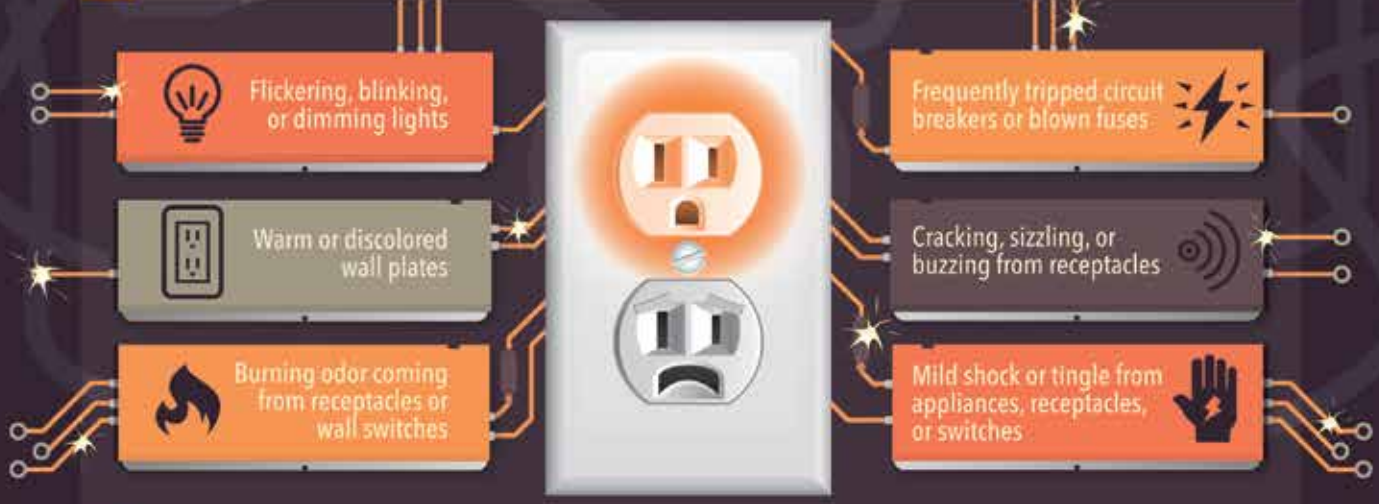
www.ocontoelectric.com



DON'T OVERLOAD YOUR HOME!

i According to the National Fire Protection Association, **47,700 home fires** in the U.S. are caused by electrical failure or malfunction each year. These fires result in **418 deaths**, **1,570 injuries**, and **\$1.4 billion in property damage**. Overloaded electrical circuits are a major cause of residential fires. Help lower your risk of electrical fires by not overloading your electrical system.

OVERLOADED CIRCUIT WARNING SIGNS



HOW TO PREVENT ELECTRICAL OVERLOADS

<p>Never use extension cords or multi-outlet converters for appliances.</p> 	<p>All major appliances should be plugged directly into a wall receptacle outlet. Only plug one heat-producing appliance into a receptacle outlet at a time.</p> 
<p>A heavy reliance on extension cords is an indication that you have too few outlets to address your needs. Have a qualified electrician inspect your home and add new outlets.</p> 	<p>Power strips only add additional outlets; they do not change the amount of power being received from the outlet.</p> 

50%

The CPSC estimates more than 50% of electrical fires that occur every year can be prevented by Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCIs). To learn more about AFCIs, visit ESFi.org.



Only use the appropriate watt bulb for any lighting fixture. Using a larger watt light bulb may cause a fire.



www.facebook.com/ESFi.org

www.twitter.com/ESFIdotorg

www.youtube.com/ESFIdotorg

BE HASSLE FREE!

Sign up for Automated Payment Plan

OEC has an automatic bill payment system known as ACH, and it is one of the easiest ways to pay your bill. We have many members that have been using this convenient, hassle-free method for years.

ACH can benefit you in the following ways:

- Save time by not having to write a check.
- Always pay your bill on time, even if you're out of town, so you don't have any late fees.
- Save money on postage and checks.
- Easy to sign up and can be canceled at any time.
- It's FREE.

How ACH Works

The first step is calling the office so we can set up your payments. Payments can be deducted from your checking or savings account or by a debit card or credit card (Visa, MasterCard, Discovery).

Your payment will then be automatically deducted from your account on the third of every month. If the third falls on a weekend it will be withdrawn on the following Monday. This is not considered past due.

A statement will still be mailed or emailed to you each month so you will know the amount withdrawn and be able to view your usage information. (235001)

Other Forms of Payment

Pay by phone. You can make secure payments 24/7 on your account by calling 1-855-356-6335. Have your OEC ac-

count number or telephone number associated with your electric account available as you will need it to gain access to the payment options. From there you simply follow the prompts to complete the transaction.

Night deposit. A night deposit box is available for your convenience. The deposit box is located at the main entrance of the OEC office building. It is very secure, and payments in the night deposit are processed the next business day.

SmartHub – pay online. With SmartHub, you can compare usage, view weather data, pay bills, report an outage, and contact our office. Access SmartHub through your PC, tablet, or smartphone. To get the app on your smartphone or tablet, visit the App Store (iOS) or the GooglePlay Store (Android) and search for SmartHub. (See SmartHub ad below)

Office and Retail Locations. OEC's office accepts payments during normal business hours: Mon.–Fri.: 7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. RadioShack in Oconto Falls accepts OEC electric bill payments during business hours. Store hours are: Mon.–Fri.: 9 a.m. – 7 p.m., Sat.: 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Address is 323 E. Highland Dr., Oconto Falls.

Budget billing. OEC offers a budget payment plan. The budget amount is an average based on your previous 12-month usage. To qualify for budget billing, you must have a zero balance on your electric account and have six months of consecutive on-time payments. You must be an active member of OEC for the past 12 months at your present location.

OEC employees are always happy to assist you with any of the bill payment options.



The Center of Customer Engagement

SmartHub provides convenient account access and two-way communication to OEC online or via your mobile device. Manage payments, notify customer service for account and service issues, check your usage and receive special messaging from OEC all at the touch of a button.

- Bill reminders
- Safe and secure
- Contact customer service

- Bill payment
- Service usage details
- Free

Account Management at your Fingertips


Check Usage


Pay Bill


Report Service Issues


Secure


Customer Service

Safe & Secure



SmartHub provides a safe and secure environment for bill payments and transaction between OEC and your financial institution.

How do I get SmartHub?

From your device or computer, go to www.ocontoelectric.com. Click on the SmartHub icon.

iOS Users



Available on the iPhone



Scan this QR code to access SmartHub in the Apple iTunes App Store.

Android Users



Download for Android



Scan this QR code to access SmartHub in the Android market.



LOOK OUT FOR GALLOPING LINES

High winds and ice can affect power lines in a way that makes them gallop. Strong winter winds can cause ice to build up on one side of a power line. When this disproportionate buildup occurs, it changes the flow of air around the line, which can then cause it to start bouncing—potentially damaging the lines, causing power outages, and even making the lines to fall to the ground.

Once galloping starts, there is not much a power company can do to alleviate it until winds die down. This is why many power lines have objects, like twisted wire or round or angular pieces of metal, attached to the lines. These devices are placed on power lines to help reduce the galloping of lines and prevent potential danger.

Stay away from galloping lines. If you see galloping or downed lines, contact OEC as soon as possible. It is important to keep your distance from downed power lines, as it is impossible to visually assess if the line is energized.

Be sure to have a storm preparedness kit ready before a storm strikes to help

get you and your family through a power outage. This kit includes: bottled water, non-perishable food, blankets, warm clothing, first aid kit/medicine, flashlight, radio, extra batteries, and toiletries.

Safe Electricity offers additional tips on how to stay warm during a winter power outage:

- Stay inside, and dress warm.
- Close off unneeded rooms and place draft blocks at the bottom of doors to minimize cold air entering the house.
- Cover windows at night.
- Be aware of the temperature in your home. Infants and elderly people are more susceptible to the cold. You may want to stay with friends or relatives or go to a shelter if you cannot keep your home warm.
- When the power is restored, there may be a power surge. To protect your circuits and appliances, switch off lights and unplug appliances. Leave one light switched on as a quick reminder that the power is restored.

For more information on electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



- February 13** **Deadline for Co-Ops YES! Conference application**
- February 17** **Deadline for scholarship application**
- March 6–7** **Co-Ops YES! Youth Leadership Conference, Eau Claire**
- March 25** **Oconto Electric Cooperative's 80th Annual Meeting**

HIDDEN ACCOUNT NUMBERS

Oconto Electric Cooperative hides two account numbers in the local pages of the *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News* each month. If you spot your account number, call our office before you receive the next issue, and OEC will give you a \$15 credit on your electric bill or a \$25 credit if you have a load management receiver. The January account numbers belonged to Marvin Ziesmer, Lena, and Thomas Jaeger, Gillett.

Byron C. Nolde, CEO

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Katie Jagiello, Editor

