



Energy theft a crime that doesn't pay

Stealing electricity is a crime that HELCO takes very seriously. People who illegally divert power not only steal from their neighbors and damage equipment, but they also create hazardous conditions for our community and families.

Losses related to energy theft increase the cost of electric service and end up being paid for by all other customers. Just as bad, those who illegally tamper with a meter or a power line risk electrocution and threaten community safety with the possibility of electrical fire.

Tampering can also damage HELCO's power distribution system, which could result in a widespread outage and leave homes and businesses without power.



Under Hawaii law, energy theft is a felony or misdemeanor, depending on the value of the stolen electricity. Penalties can be as steep as a five-year prison term. In civil court, thieves could end up paying triple the value of the diverted services.

HELCO is dedicated to putting an end to this dangerous and costly crime. All field employees are trained to identify and report suspected electrical theft. Other employees do their part by analyzing large fluctuations in monthly bills. Each report is then investigated thoroughly by a team of energy theft experts.

If you suspect someone of stealing electricity, call us at **969-6666**. You don't have to leave your name. Just leave the name and/or address of the suspected location. Or e-mail HELCO at metertampering@heco.com.

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Solar tax credit renewed



On June 26, 2003, Governor Linda Lingle signed into law the Hawaii State tax credit for renewable energy. The law extends the existing tax credit of 35% of the cost of residential solar water heating (up to \$1,750) until at least 2008. Clean, renewable energy from the sun can help households save between \$5 and \$10 per person, per month on their electric bill. And HELCO provides a \$1,000 rebate and a free quality inspection for solar systems installed through approved solar contractors. For more information on HELCO's **Residential Solar Water Heating Program**, call 969-0127.



Governor Lingle signs the extended solar tax credit bill for renewable energy.



COMING UP: HELCO in Our Community

In Kona:

11th Annual Big Island Farm Fair

Saturday, September 13, 2003
12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Old Kona Airport State Park

In Hilo:

HELCO's Energy Fair

Saturday, October 4, 2003
9:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
The Prince Kuhio Plaza

Round up your family and friends and join our HELCO volunteers at these fun-filled events. There will be energy-charged, hands-on activities and displays, hydrogen fuel cell demonstrations, an array of educational material, prizes and much more.



POWER TIPS

Choosing and using a portable generator



Electricity is never more precious than after a disaster. While HELCO does not suggest that all customers need to buy an emergency portable generator, in some situations you may find it desirable. If you're thinking of buying one for your home, here are some important points to consider:

- Size it to provide adequate wattage to power **only essential** electrical appliances (refrigerator, microwave or toaster oven, lights and life support systems).
- Generally, a small generator of 2 to 3 kilowatts is suitable for residential use. We recommend consulting with a reputable generator dealer for help to evaluate your needs. The Energy Use Guide in HELCO's **Energy Tips and Choices** booklet can help you determine the wattage requirements for household appliances you plan to power with the generator. The booklets are available at HELCO's Hilo, Waimea and Kona Customer Service lobbies or online at www.heco.com.

- If you intend to install a permanent emergency generator, HELCO requires that your electrical contractor submit building/electrical plans approved by the County of Hawaii for review and approval to ensure safety requirements are met.

Some safety tips to keep in mind for operating a portable generator:

- **Never plug your generator directly into an outlet. Backfeed occurs when a portable generator is plugged into house outlets causing the power lines to become energized by the generator's voltage. A line crew assuming the distribution lines are de-energized could be severely shocked or even killed from an improperly installed generator.**
- Generators should be properly grounded in accordance with the instruction manual provided by the manufacturer.
- Store reserve fuel in a safe place away from the generator or any other equipment that may ignite the fuel. Use containers designed for fuel storage.
- Be sure the generator's fuel exhaust and cooling systems are well designed to minimize dangerous fumes and overheating.
- **A word of caution.** Avoid using your generator to power sensitive appliances like computers, television sets and other electronic devices at the same time it powers appliances with motors such as refrigerators, air conditioners or pumps. Motor starts may damage sensitive electronic equipment.



RECIPE OF THE MONTH

HAWAIIAN BEEF STEW



- 3 lbs chuck roast, cut into 1 1/2-inch cubes
- 3/4 round onion, chopped
- 8 to 9 cloves garlic, crushed
- Water
- 1 tablespoon Hawaiian salt
- 1/2 tablespoon soy sauce
- 5 lbs potatoes, cut into 1 1/2-inch cubes
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper

In a large saucepot, place chuck roast, 1/2 of the onion, and 6 cloves of garlic. Fill pot with enough water to cover. Bring to a boil; reduce heat, cover and simmer for 20 minutes or until the beef is tender. Drain and rinse the beef with cold water. Return the beef to the saucepot, add enough water to cover. Stir in the Hawaiian salt, soy sauce, 2 to 3 cloves of garlic, 1/4 of the onion, potatoes and pepper. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer for 20-30 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Makes 10-12 servings.

