



## The **shocking** facts about lightning

In this season of winter storms, we hope you'll take a moment to consider these home safety tips.

Lightning can strike as far as ten miles away from the rain area in a thunderstorm. That is about the distance you can hear thunder. Therefore, if you can hear thunder, you are within striking distance! Take shelter and follow safety measures immediately.



Lightning can enter a home in one of three ways: through a direct strike; through wires or pipes that extend outside the house; and through the ground. Lightning can travel through electrical, phone, plumbing, radio, and television reception systems. Lightning can also travel through any metal wires or bars found in concrete walls or flooring.

Once inside your home, you should stay away from windows, doors, and lanais. Do not lie on concrete floors and do not lean against concrete walls.

Avoid contact with anything that conducts electricity. This means not handling electrical equipment, electrical cords, or corded telephones.

It is recommended that you unplug electrical appliances, computers, and other sensitive electronic equipment before a storm becomes severe. A high-voltage spike from a lightning strike can cause the insulation of an electric cord to fail and an appliance to short-circuit, both of which can cause a fire. High-voltage spikes can also occur when storm winds push tree limbs into power lines.

Avoid contact with plumbing, which includes not washing your hands, taking a shower, washing dishes, or doing laundry. Washers and dryers are especially dangerous because they are made of metal and are connected to electrical and plumbing systems. Additionally, the dryer vent provides an electrical path from the outside.

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## Automatic bill payment

With Automatic Bill Payment your bank, savings and loan institution, or credit union will handle the responsibility of paying your monthly electric bill by deducting your monthly charge from any account you choose. This is a free service that eliminates the bother of monthly bill paying, saving you time and postage.

For your convenience, the payment will be deducted from your account about 13 days after the bill is mailed to you. The date will be shown on the bill. You will have plenty of time to review the bill before it is paid and to call our customer service representatives if you have a question.

For more information on Automatic Bill Payment and to request an application form, call HECO at 548-7311. You can also sign up for Automatic Bill Payment at your bank.

## Is your circuit overloaded?

Do you plug a lot of electronic devices into a single power strip or combine extension cords to plug in more appliances? You could be close to overloading your electrical circuits.

Circuits in older homes may be designed to carry a maximum of 15 amps, or 1,800 watts, while most circuits in newer homes are designed to carry 20 amps, or 2,400 watts.

If you stop to think that hair dryers use 1,200 to 1,875 watts of electricity and toasters use 800 to 1,400 watts, you can see how easy it can be to overload a circuit.

To calculate if a circuit can handle additional electrical loads, determine the electrical demand of all appliances and fixtures on that circuit, in either amps or watts. \*

This information is provided on the nameplate. Then add the energy use, in amps or watts, of all appliances that may be "on" or "turned on" at the same time on that circuit. The total should not exceed the circuit's breaker rating. The rating is printed, in amps, on each circuit breaker.

\* These formulas may be useful:

$$\text{watts} = \text{amps} \times \text{volts} \quad (120 \text{ or } 240 \text{ volts})$$

$$\text{amps} = \text{watts} \div \text{volts} \quad (120 \text{ or } 240 \text{ volts})$$

## The energy diet pyramid

Think light and trim the "waste line" on your electric bill by following HECO's "energy diet pyramid."



## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

### Simple, "one," and healthy chicken adobo



- 2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1/2 tablespoon whole black peppercorns
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup saltless soy sauce (available at Japanese grocery stores)
- 1/2 cup cider vinegar
- 2 bay leaves
- 7 cloves garlic, chopped

In a large sauce pot, combine all ingredients. Bring to a boil; lower to medium heat and simmer until liquid is almost completely evaporated. Do not stir while simmering to prevent chicken pieces from falling apart. Serve with brown rice. Recipe makes 6 servings.