CONSUMER Lines
MECO SEPTEMBER 2005

Remodeling or landscaping?

Check before you dig!

Before digging on your property determine the location of any underground power lines that may be in the work area.

You can look for pad-mounted electrical equipment or handhole covers (small manhole covers), which indicate that underground lines exist. Or contact MECO at 871-2394 to determine and mark the location of underground cables. Plan to give MECO 72 hours notice for this free service.

You should also check with telephone, gas, and television cable companies before starting any excavation work.

When digging near underground lines, proceed cautiously, using hand-digging methods. We recommend that you use non-metallic type tools.

If an underground power line is damaged during excavation, warn others to keep away and call MECO at 871-7777.

If you are excavating with a backhoe or other mechanical equipment and you damage an underground power line, remain on the equipment until it can be cleared from the power line. If you must get off the equipment due to another hazard, jump free from the equipment so that your body clears it before touching the ground.

Don't take the power of electricity for granted. Keep your eye out for electrical hazards and work safely.

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Net metering encourages renewable energy

Net energy metering encourages the use of renewable energy by residential and commercial customers. Customers who operate photovoltaic, wind, biomass, or hydroelectric systems (or a combined system) producing up to 50 kilowatts of electricity can take advantage of net energy metering.

Customers can feed excess electricity produced by their renewable energy system into MECO's electric grid. The kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity sent to the grid are subtracted from the kWh drawn from the grid throughout the month. Customers are only billed for the difference, the net kilowatt-hour use, plus the minimum monthly charge for electric service.

This is a good deal because these customers get credit at retail rates for renewable energy fed to the grid. And, customers will soon be able to carry forward credits that exceed the number of kWh drawn to subsequent bills within a 12-month period.

For detailed information about net energy metering, including forms for a net energy metering agreement, click on the "Renewable Energy" link on www.maujielectric.com, or call MECO on Maui at 871-8461 or toll-free from Molokai and Lanai at 1-877-871-8461.

If you don't have solar water heating....

Electric water heating usually accounts for the largest use of energy in a typical Hawaii home. Solar water heating will save you the most money. But if solar isn't your choice, be sure your water heater is a high-efficiency model. Here's how to choose an efficient electric water heater.

The First Hour Rating

First, estimate how much hot water your family needs. The First Hour Rating (FHR) is given in gallons and is more important than the gallon size of the tank. The FHR is listed near the upper left corner of the yellow and black EnergyGuide label and indicates how much hot water the heater will deliver during a busy hour.

The FHR will be higher than the capacity of the tank, since incoming cold water is heated as hot water is used. Your retailer can help you choose the best FHR based on your current water heater, the number of people in your house, showers, hot water laundry loads, and other factors.

Determining Efficiency

Now that you have your FHR, find the Energy Factor (EF) number, which may be on the manufacturer's sticker on the tank itself, or on the box or packaging. The higher the EF number is, the more efficient the heater is.

With the MECO rebates shown below you may be able to purchase a high-efficiency water heater for less than a standard one.

Tank Capacity (gallons)	Energy Factor (EF)	Retrofit Rebate	New Construction Rebate
35 or less	.94	$40	$60
36 - 45	.93	$40	$60
46 - 64	.92	$50	$80
65	.91	$50	$80
66 - 118	.88	$70	$80
119 or more	.83	$70	$80

No matter what kind of water heater you have, a temperature setting of 120° is usually sufficient and won't waste energy. Some dishwashers have "boosters" that will heat incoming water to the appropriate temperature if necessary. Check manufacturer's recommendations.

Compared to an inefficient heater, a high-efficiency water heater can save you more than $300 over ten years. For more information on MECO's rebates, call **1-888-MECO SUN**.

TAKE THE MYSTERY OUT OF SOLAR

Attend a free class!

Learn the basics about solar water heating systems by attending a free, one-hour class offered by MECO. The class will cover:

- How solar water heaters and solar electric systems work
- What to look for when buying a solar water heater
- Financing options
- How to use a solar water heater
- Maintenance and troubleshooting
- When to replace the system

The class, cosponsored by Maui Community College (MCC), will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in room 107 of the Laulima Building at MCC on the following dates: 9/13/05, 10/12/05, 11/17/05, and 12/12/05.

Preregistration is required. Please call MCC at 984-3231 to register. For information on solar water heating systems call us at 1-888-MECO-SUN.

Come visit MECO at the Health Fair!

Join MECO in Our Community as we celebrate Energy Awareness Month in October.

Come to the **Maui County Annual Senior Citizens Health Fair** at the Maui War Memorial Complex on **Saturday, October 29, 2005**, from **8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** to enjoy the festivities and learn about energy conservation.

Be sure to visit our energy exhibit and talk to MECO staff about how you can save on your electricity use.

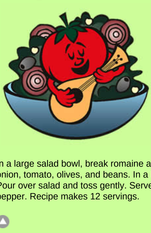
See you there!

Molokai and Lanai customers: *Note our new phone number*

If you live on Molokai and Lanai there is a new phone number for calling MECO. Our new, toll-free number is 1-877 871-8461. This number replaces 553-3234 on Molokai and 565-6445 on Lanai.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Portuguese Green Salad



1 head romaine lettuce
1 bunch watercress
1 red onion, thinly sliced
1 large tomato, diced
1/2 cup pitted black olives, sliced
1/2 cup garbanzo beans
1/4 cup salad oil
1/4 cup lemon juice
Hawaiian rock salt
Freshly ground black pepper

In a large salad bowl, break romaine and watercress into bite-size pieces. Add onion, tomato, olives, and beans. In a blender, whip salad oil with lemon juice. Pour over salad and toss gently. Serve with rock salt and freshly ground black pepper. Recipe makes 12 servings.