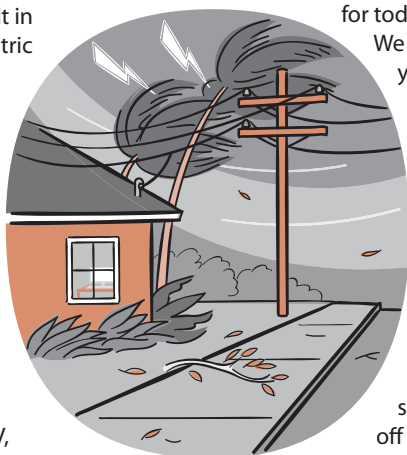


Stormy weather electrical safety

Hawaii's winter storm season has arrived, bringing wind, rain, and lightning. These often severe weather conditions increase the possibility of power quality disturbances and power outages that could result in damage to electric appliances and sensitive electronic equipment.

Following are some tips for protecting your appliances and electronics:

- ❖ Ensure that your cable TV, telephone, and utility service lines are properly grounded.
- ❖ Unplug unneeded electric appliances, computers, and other sensitive electronic equipment when a storm is approaching.



- ❖ Protect electric appliances that remain plugged in by using a quality surge suppressor. Note that surge suppressors commonly found in low-cost multi-strip outlets may not provide adequate protection for today's electronics.

We recommend that you purchase a product that bears the certification mark of the Underwriters Laboratory, in particular, UL 1449 (2nd edition).

- ❖ If the power goes out, we suggest shutting off power to large appliances, such as the electric water heater, refrigerator, and freezer, and waiting until power has been restored before turning them on again.

If you believe your electric equipment has been damaged as a result

of a power outage, you can file a claim with us at Hawaii Electric Light Company. The claim needs to be filed within 30 days of the power outage. If it is determined that the damage to your equipment was caused by conditions within our control, you will receive compensation.

For more information regarding making claims, please refer to the flyer included with this month's electric bill, or call us at **969-0279**.

Downed power line safety

- ▶ If stormy weather knocks down a power line, don't touch the line or drive over it. Stay at least 30 feet away from it. Report the downed line by calling us at **969-6666**.
- ▶ If a power line falls on a car that you are in, stay inside the car if possible and wait for help. If you can, try to break contact with the line by driving the car away from it. If you need to get out of the car right away, jump free of the car so that your body clears the vehicle before touching the ground.
- ▶ If someone has come into contact with a fallen power line, don't try to rescue the individual. Instead, call **911** for help.

Public Benefits fee begins on January 1, 2009

Beginning with this month's electric bill, you will see a charge called the *PBF Surcharge* (Public Benefits Fund Surcharge). The Hawaii Public Utilities Commission (PUC) recently approved this surcharge to collect funds that will be used to pay for future energy-efficiency programs, including customer incentives such as

rebates, to reduce electricity consumption in Hawaii.

The programs will be administered by a third party administrator, reporting to the PUC. The *PBF Surcharge* may be adjusted by the PUC and the amount may be offset to some extent by a decrease in the IRP Cost Recovery Surcharge.



Hot tips for water heater use

In Hawaii, conventional electric water heaters generally account for the largest portion of the monthly electricity use in homes without air conditioning. Depending on family size and hot water use, these water heaters consume an estimated 260 kilowatt-hours (kWh) per month, based on a family of four, costing roughly \$100 per month for a Big Island family.

Following are some tips for using electric water heaters:

- ✓ Repair leaking faucets. A leaking hot water faucet not only wastes water, but up to 400 kWh per year.
- ✓ Repair hot water leaks, which can cause extreme increases in electricity and water costs.
- ✓ Wrap older water heaters. Installing an insulation blanket around water heaters purchased before 2004 helps to conserve energy. To further reduce heat loss, insulate both water pipes leading out from the hot water tank.
- ✓ Install modern flow restrictors in older faucets and showerheads. Flow restrictors reduce water flow by one to three gallons per minute.
- ✓ Install low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators to reduce water use.
- ✓ Set the water heater thermostat between 120°F and 125°F. Be sure to turn off the electricity to the water heater at the circuit breaker panel before adjusting the temperature.
- ✓ Take short five-minute showers instead of tub baths.
- ✓ While shaving or rinsing dishes by hand, cover or close the drain and fill the basin or sink rather than letting water run.

Earned Income Tax Credit

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a federal income tax credit for low-income workers. The EITC reduces the amount of tax an individual owes, and when the credit exceeds the amount of taxes owed, it may be returned in the form of a refund.

To qualify, taxpayers must meet certain requirements and file a tax return, even if they do not earn enough money to be obligated to file a tax return. This tax credit has no effect on certain welfare benefits.

EITC filers may receive free income tax assistance services, including fast, safe, and accurate electronic filing. For information on service sites near you call Aloha United Way's help line, from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., weekdays excluding holidays, toll-free at: **211** or **1 877 275-6569**. EITC information is also available online at: **www.irs.gov/eitc**

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

KUNG HEE FAT CHOI!



2009 Year Of The Ox

This recipe is a popular dish eaten especially during the Chinese New Year celebrations. The Chinese Year of the Ox begins on January 29, 2009.

Chinese Onion Pancakes

4 cups flour
1 1/4 cups hot water
1 cup chopped green onions
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1 teaspoon salt

1/4 pound char siu or steamed lup cheong, finely diced (optional)
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
Oyster sauce

In a bowl, combine flour and hot water; mix well and form dough into a ball. On a lightly floured board, knead dough for 8 to 10 minutes or until smooth and elastic; let stand for 30 minutes. In a bowl, combine onions, the 1/2 cup vegetable oil, salt, and char siu or lup cheong. Divide dough into 6 equal portions. With rolling pin, roll out each portion into a 10- to 12-inch circle. Spread 1/4 cup onion mixture over each circle of dough. Roll dough into a log; then coil into a ball. With rolling pin, roll out each coil into an 8-inch circle. Heat a griddle on high heat; brush with oil. Lower heat to medium and cook pancakes until lightly browned on both sides. Cut into wedges and serve hot with oyster sauce on the side. Recipe makes 6 servings.