

Be prepared

To Safely Fly Kites and Avoid Downed Power Lines.

There are few spring and summer activities more fun for children – and often for their parents – as flying kites. But kites, if not handled properly, can create serious dangers, too. Here are some guidelines for safely enjoying kites. Teach them to your children.

- ◆ Always look up first! Only fly kites in open areas, far away from power lines. Electricity seeks the shortest path to the earth, and a kite string can easily become an electrical conductor, killing the person holding the line. Even if the kite doesn't actually touch the power line, the kite and its string can build up enough static electricity to pass along a dangerous shock.
- ◆ If a kite does somehow get tangled in a power line, let go of it immediately and never try to untangle it yourself. Call your local utility company.
- ◆ If a kite gets snarled in a tree, don't climb the tree to retrieve the kite. Sometimes power lines run through tree branches, creating a hidden danger.
- ◆ Never fly a kite that has a wire instead of a string, and never fly a kite if its string is wet or covered in dirt. These factors make the kite even more likely to conduct electricity.
- ◆ Never fly a kite in stormy weather. Benjamin Franklin was lucky not to have been electrocuted while performing his famous experiment – so don't try it. Lofting a kite into a storm makes the kite a giant lightning rod; lightning will find it.
- ◆ Don't fly your kite over people or highways. Some kites can reach speeds of up to 80 miles an hour. If they crash, they can cause serious injuries to bystanders or cause drivers to wreck.
- ◆ Finally, whether or not your children intend to fly kites, remind them – particularly during the stormy spring season – never to go near a downed or low-hanging power line. These lines often carry enormous electrical charges. A sudden shift in the wind can quickly and violently blow the wire into a person. If people or pets do get caught in power lines, never touch them or otherwise attempt to free them. Their bodies can conduct the electrical charge. Instead, call 9-1-1.

Sources: Brownsville Public Utilities Board; A Wind of Change, Las Vegas; Lower Colorado River Authority; Portland General Electric; CESC Ltd.; San Isabel Electric Association Inc.



Be prepared

Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives

