

# CURRENTS

## JNEC's July 2023 Newsletter



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### Energy-Saving Projects for the Weekend Warrior

By Abby Berry

Are you a weekend warrior? If you're considering home improvement upgrades that save energy and money, we've got a few project ideas for you—all of which can be completed in a day or less!

Here are three energy-saving projects that you can easily tackle whether you're a weekend warrior pro or a DIY dabbler.

#### Get smart about home cooling and heating.

Cooling and heating your home typically account for a large portion of energy bills. Smart thermostats can help keep your cooling and heating costs in check, with ENERGY STAR®-certified models saving about 8% on annual energy costs.

Now that smart thermostats are more affordable (as little as \$70!), this simple upgrade makes for a fun, efficient weekend project. Smart thermostats offer a variety of bells and whistles, but the average model will allow you to set custom temperature schedules, adjust the settings from anywhere (from your phone), and over time, learn your cooling and heating preferences.

Your new smart thermostat will come with step-by-step instructions, but this project typically involves shutting off your HVAC at the breaker panel, disconnecting/removing the old thermostat, installing the new smart thermostat, and connecting it to your home Wi-Fi.



Play it safe: remember to carefully read the installation instructions before you get started.

#### Boost your greenery with a rain barrel.

If you've got a green thumb, you already know that rainwater is the best water for your outdoor plants. Rainwater is free of minerals, salts and treatment chemicals found in tap water or groundwater. It also contains helpful macronutrients to foster healthy plant growth.

Installing a rain barrel is an easy way to harvest large amounts of rainwater and reduce home water use—it's a win-win. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, one rain barrel can save a homeowner 1,300 gallons of water annually.

Most residential rain barrels range in size from 50 to 90 gallons, so the size you purchase will depend on your watering needs.

The simplest way to install a rain barrel is positioning a plastic or wooden barrel directly under your gutter downspout. Basic piping may be required, but this is an easy way to harvest rainwater, and the barrel won't take up much space. Consider a cover for the top of your rain barrel to keep insects and small debris out of your harvested water.

#### Create fresh savings with a DIY clothesline.

If you have enough outdoor space available, installing a clothesline is a great way to save energy. Not only will you save on dryer costs—in the summer, you can also save on cooling costs since unwanted heat from the clothes dryer won't be added to your home (which makes your air conditioner work harder). Additionally, air drying is much gentler on fabrics and will keep your clothes and linens looking fresh longer.

You can create your own clothesline with two T-posts, wire and hook-and-eye turnbuckles. Depending on your soil, you may need a small amount of Quikrete to set the posts. Another option is installing the line between two trees. A typical load of laundry requires about 35 feet of line, so keep this in mind as you're determining the best location.

If an outdoor clothesline isn't an option, no sweat! You can easily create an indoor drying rack that folds to save space. Home improvement websites like thespruce.com and hgtv.com offer step-by-step tutorials for a variety of indoor clothes racks.

These are just a few simple ideas to help you save energy and money. So, get out there, roll up those sleeves and tackle a few projects.

Check out Jasper-Newton Electric Cooperative's website, [www.jnec.com](http://www.jnec.com), for additional energy-saving ideas and tips.

# Hurricane Preparedness Guidelines

*IF YOU ARE UNDER A HURRICANE WARNING, FIND SAFE SHELTER RIGHT AWAY.*

## When a hurricane is 36 hours from arriving

- Turn on your TV or radio in order to get the latest weather updates and emergency instructions.
- Restock your emergency preparedness kit. Include food and water sufficient for at least three days, medications, a flashlight, batteries, cash, and first aid supplies. <https://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit>

## When a hurricane is 18-36 hours from arriving

- Bookmark your city or county website for quick access to storm updates and emergency instructions.
- Bring loose, lightweight objects inside that could become projectiles in high winds (e.g., patio furniture, garbage cans); anchor objects that would be unsafe to bring inside (e.g., propane tanks); and trim or remove trees close enough to fall on the building.

## When a hurricane is 6-18 hours from arriving

- Turn on your TV/radio, or check your city/county website every 30 minutes in order to get the latest weather updates and emergency instructions.
- Charge your cell phone now so you will have a full battery in case you lose power.

## When a hurricane is 6 hours from arriving

- If you're not in an area that is recommended for evacuation, plan to stay at home or where you are and let friends and family know where you are.
- Close storm shutters, and stay away from windows. Flying glass from broken windows could injure you.
- Turn your refrigerator or freezer to the coldest setting and open only when necessary. If you lose power, food will last longer. Keep a thermometer in the refrigerator to be able to check the food temperature when the power is restored.

## Survive DURING

- If told to evacuate, do so immediately. Do not drive around barricades.
- If sheltering during high winds, go to a FEMA safe room, ICC 500 storm shelter, or a small, interior, windowless room or hallway on the lowest floor that is not subject to flooding.
- If trapped in a building by flooding, go to the highest level of the building. Do not climb into a closed attic. You may become trapped by rising flood water.

## Be Safe AFTER

- Listen to authorities for information and special instructions.
- Do not touch electrical equipment if it is wet or if you are standing in water. If it is safe to do so, turn off electricity at the main breaker or fuse box to prevent electric shock.
- Avoid wading in flood water, which can contain dangerous debris. Underground or downed power lines can also electrically charge the water.



# Guía para la Preparación de Huracanes

*SI ESTÁ BAJO UN AVISO DE HURACÁN, ENCUENTRE REFUGIO SEGURO DE INMEDIATO.*

## Cuando un huracán está a 36 horas de llegar

- Encienda su televisor o radio para obtener las últimas actualizaciones meteorológicas e instrucciones de emergencia.
- Reponga su equipo de preparación para emergencias. Incluya alimentos y agua suficientes para al menos tres días, medicamentos, una linterna, pilas, dinero en efectivo y suministros de primeros auxilios. <https://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit>

## Cuando un huracán está a 18-36 horas de llegar

- Marque el sitio web de su ciudad o condado para el acceso rápido de las actualizaciones de tormentas e instrucciones de emergencia.
- Traiga adentro objetos sueltos y ligeros que puedan convertirse en proyectiles con vientos fuertes (por ejemplo, muebles de patio, botes de basura); sujete objetos que no son seguros para llevar adentro (por ejemplo, tanques de propano); y recorte o retire los árboles que están lo suficientemente cerca como para caer en el edificio.

## Cuando un huracán está a 6-18 horas de llegar

- Encienda su televisor / radio, o visite el sitio web de su ciudad / condado cada 30 minutos para obtener las últimas actualizaciones meteorológicas e instrucciones de emergencia.
- Cargue su teléfono celular ahora para que tenga una batería llena en caso de que pierda energía.

## Cuando un huracán está a 6 horas de llegar

- Si no se encuentra en un área recomendada para la evacuación, planifique quedarse en su casa o donde se encuentra y avise a sus amigos y familiares dónde se encuentra.
- Cierre las contraventanas y manténgase alejado de las ventanas. Los vidrios que vuelan de las ventanas rotas podrían dañarlo.
- Gire su refrigerador o congelador a la posición más fría y ábralos solo cuando sea necesario. Si pierde la energía, la comida durará más tiempo. Mantenga un termómetro en el refrigerador para poder verificar la temperatura de los alimentos cuando se restaure la energía.

## Sobrevivir DURANTE

- Si se le indica que evacue, hágalo inmediatamente. No maneje alrededor de las barricadas.
- Si se refugia durante vientos fuertes, vaya a una habitación segura de FEMA, refugio contra tormentas ICC 500 o una habitación o pasillo pequeño e interior sin ventanas en el piso más bajo que no esté sujeto a inundaciones.
- Si queda atrapado en un edificio por inundación, vaya al nivel más alto del edificio. No suba a un ático cerrado. Usted puede quedar atrapado por las crecientes inundaciones.

## Sea Seguro DESPUÉS

- Escuche a las autoridades para obtener información e instrucciones especiales.
- No toque el equipo eléctrico si está mojado o si está parado en el agua. Si es seguro hacerlo, apague la electricidad en el interruptor principal o en la caja de fusibles para evitar una descarga eléctrica.
- Evite vadearse en el agua de la inundación, que puede contener desechos peligrosos. Las líneas eléctricas subterráneas o caídas también pueden cargar el agua eléctricamente.



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Summer is a prime opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors. To reduce home energy use, avoid using your oven and use a grill instead. Not only will cooking outdoors eliminate the electricity used to power the stove, but it will also avoid raising the temperature inside your home, reducing the need for air conditioning or cooling.

You can also avoid using the oven with tasty no-bake recipes. Get creative in the kitchen (or the backyard) and find new ways to save energy!

*Source: Dept. of Energy*



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