




# Meriwether Lewis Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



# Member Handbook

[www.mlec.com](http://www.mlec.com)



**MLEC**

Your Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup>  
Cooperative



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## Keep us posted!

Please let MLEC know any time you have a change in your address or phone number for the home or business where your power is connected.

Update your information by contacting MLEC:

- **Phone your local office**
- **E-mail us at [power@mlec.com](mailto:power@mlec.com)**

## Follow us on social media!



<https://www.facebook.com/MeriwetherLewisEC>



<https://twitter.com/MLECPower>

# WELCOME *to* MLEC

As a member-owner, you have unlocked a door to exceptional services, and we're not just talking electricity. MLEC has a rich history of commitment and progress. We provide other services (like the ones outlined in this handbook) and will continue to offer more to add value to your MLEC membership.

While MLEC provides services like electricity, energy efficiency information, safety programs, and rebate programs, we also maintain an active, visible role in community development and school programs.

MLEC and its employees take pride in the relationship we have with our members and communities. A cooperative means working together and that's something MLEC members, communities, employees and board members have been doing well since 1939 and will continue into a new day.


## *We welcome you to MLEC!*

- *Member-owned, not-for-profit*
- *Safe, affordable, reliable electricity*
- *Committed to community*
- *Pairing innovation & technology*

*Providing more than energy  
to the members we serve.*



**Meriwether Lewis  
Electric Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

# THE COOPERATIVE DIFFERENCE

**What is an electric co-op?** Three key phrases that describe electric co-ops:

**Locally owned and operated.** Electric cooperatives are owned by their members and focus on member needs and local priorities. They are an integral part of the communities they serve.

**Member first.** Co-ops weren't created to make a profit, but offer stability, reliability and better value.

**Responsive to local needs.** Electric co-ops are located in the communities they serve, making them easily accessible and responsive to members' needs. They work hard to achieve a better quality of life for their member-owners.

With the help of Franklin D. Roosevelt, who established the Rural Electrification Administration in 1935, friends and neighbors banded together to create a new kind of electric utility, where the voice of every person made a difference.

Electric cooperatives brought electric power to the countryside when no one else would.

Today, America's electric cooperatives continue to answer that call. With the same focus on member needs, today's electric cooperatives provide much more than competitively priced, reliable energy. They are committed to improving the quality of life in their communities and to the member-owners who live there.



# BILLING *and* PAYMENT OPTIONS

- **HANDI-PAY:** Each month the amount of your electric bill is automatically transferred from your checking account to MLEC by an electronic transaction on the due date. The debit is listed on your bank statement. You will continue to receive a statement each month marked “**DRAFTED - DO NOT PAY.**”
- **VIEW AND PAY BILL ONLINE:** Members can view and pay online at [www.mlec.com](http://www.mlec.com). Credit card and electronic check accepted.
- **KIOSKS:** Payment kiosks are ready to serve you anytime at our Hickman, Humphreys, Perry, and Lewis County offices. Cash or credit card accepted for real-time payment posting.
- **PAYMENT BOX:** MLEC has payment boxes located outside each office for a quick payment during or after office hours. Please use only a check or money order and include your bill stub in the envelope for proper crediting.
- **MAIL:** Return envelopes are included with each statement. When mailing a payment, please enclose the bill stub to ensure the proper account is credited. Also, for your protection, mail only a check or money order. **DO NOT MAIL CASH.**
- **IN PERSON:** To ensure we deliver on the promise of excellent service, MLEC has a fully staffed office in each county we serve. Office hours are Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- **CREDIT CARDS:** MLEC accepts Visa, MasterCard, and Discover.
- **BY PHONE:** Call your local office and press ‘**Option 5**’ to pay by phone 24/7/365.

For convenience and budget planning, your electric bill is due on the same date each month. If your due date falls on a weekend or holiday, payment can be made before 4:30 p.m. the next business day without incurring a late fee. If the bill is not paid by the cut-off date on your statement, service is subject to disconnection and a reconnect fee.

# MY POWER MY WAY

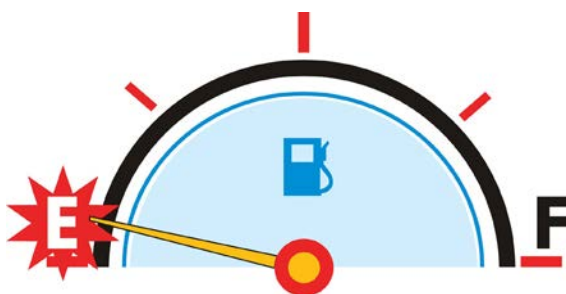


Traditionally, people receive a utility bill at the end of the month for electricity they used in the past 30 days.

**My Power My Way** allows you to choose how much and how often you want to pay.

Think of **My Power My Way** like putting gas in your car. You can purchase small amounts every few days (\$10 suggested minimum) or “fill up” the tank and not worry about it for several weeks.

When your supply is low, you’ll receive alerts via phone, text or email to remind you to purchase more. There are other benefits as well...



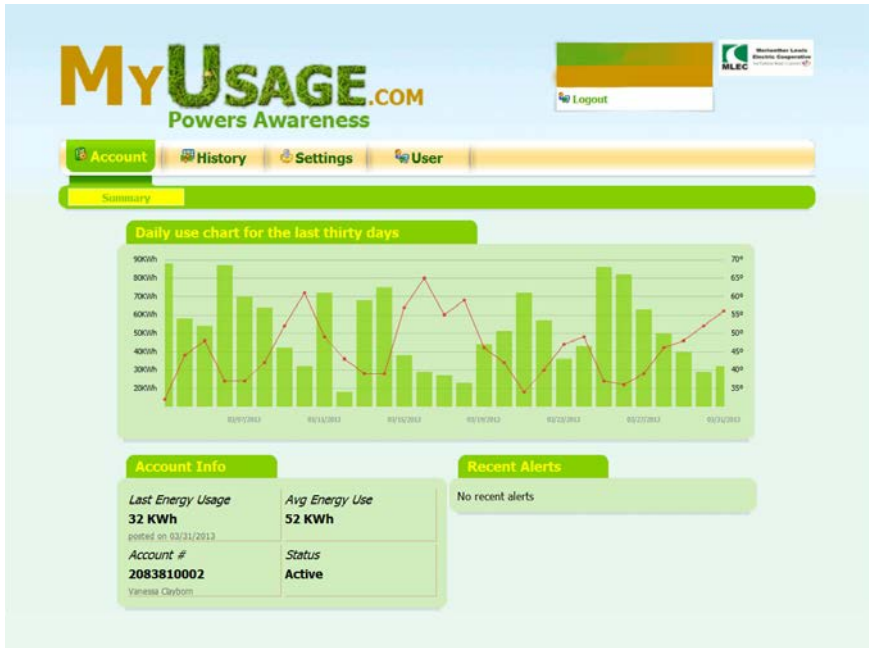
**No Deposits**

**No Late Fees**

**No Monthly Bills**

# MyUsage.com

*It's Fast. It's Easy. It's Free!*



MyUsage.com offers all MLEC members the opportunity to:

- **View detailed electric use history.** It displays daily high and low temperatures, your daily kWh use and your estimated power cost for each day.
- **Monitor how daily temperatures influence the amount of energy used at your home.** For example, extreme temperatures (hot or cold) can result in high energy use.
- **Track your daily use.** By monitoring energy use and adjusting habits and appliance operation, you can reduce the amount of electricity you use each day and save money!



# SPECIAL SERVICES

**The Tennessee Magazine** is mailed each month, as a courtesy, to all residential members. It contains articles on everything from recipes to travel. The seven-page MLEC section is written especially for our members. (A digital version is also available at [www.mlec.com](http://www.mlec.com).)



**Project Help** is a program designed to help our members who are having temporary difficulty paying their winter energy bills. Many members contribute to this local fund by having one dollar added to their monthly bill.

**Brochures and information** regarding water heater and heat pump programs, safety, energy efficiency, and cash rebates are available at MLEC district offices or via e-mail.

**Security light installation & maintenance** is covered by a small monthly fee added to your electric bill. They increase safety around the house and allow you to extend your time outdoors past sundown.

**Low interest heat pump loans** are available to qualified members. Payments are made to MLEC for convenience. Some restrictions apply. For inquiries, call our Energy Specialist at 931.729.7257.

**School and community programs** help MLEC be a vital part of our communities. MLEC sponsors programs such as the Washington D.C. Youth Tour Short Story and Scholarship Contest, Louie the Lightning Bug safety presentations, Adopt-A-School Grants, 4-H Camp sponsorships and tuition grants, an annual poster contest and rural economic development loans\*. Need a speaker for your school or organization on electrical safety or energy efficiency? We're available!

**FREE Technical Assistance** for non-residential members is offered by MLEC. Wiring designs, power factor recommendations, heating and air conditioning, lighting, energy audits and more are available.

*\* This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

## SPECIAL SERVICES *cont.*

As an MLEC member, you receive a **FREE Co-op Connections® Card** that provides discounts at participating businesses on everything from prescriptions to travel. Check [www.mlec.com](http://www.mlec.com) for a list of all discounts offered.



**Home Insulation Program (HIP)** rebates (\$500 max) are available to MLEC members for the installation of attic insulation. Some restrictions apply; call for details.

Most homeowners know that changing your furnace or air conditioning filter regularly saves wear and tear on your equipment. But did you know it can reduce your heating and cooling cost up to 15 percent? That's why MLEC offers **FilterChange.coop** — a simple program where you can purchase discounted furnace and AC filters online. Home delivery is **FREE!**

**Check out [www.mlec.com](http://www.mlec.com)** as your source of information. With videos and interactive tools, you'll learn how to "snuff out" phantom electronics and other wasted kilowatts. Go to [www.mlec.com](http://www.mlec.com) and search "Ways to Save" to get started.

Call in the experts for **Free Home Evaluation**. The eScore™ program helps get your home to its most energy efficient. The audit checks insulation, doors, windows, heating and cooling equipment and more. Then, as you decide to install some of the suggested energy saving measures, rebates are available to help! Call MLEC to get started. *Some restrictions apply and online versions are available.*



Consider yourself environmentally friendly and looking for a way to be involved? Sign-up for **Green Power Switch**. Your choice to add \$4 to your electric bill adds green power, produced by renewable resources, to the TVA power mix. Make a difference, turn on the switch!

# HOME ENERGY SAVINGS TIPS

## HEATING AND COOLING:

- If you're gone for an extended period and have a central system, adjust the thermostat down in winter and up in summer. One degree makes a difference in the amount of your monthly energy bill. Don't pay to keep furniture cool or warm. (You might even look at purchasing a programmable thermostat to help!)
- Keep air conditioner filters clean. Dirty filters make heating/cooling systems work harder and mean you pay more in energy costs.
- Keep all doors and windows closed when the air/heat is on. (Ask your kids to read this one aloud several times.)

## WATER HEATING AND LAUNDRY:

- Be sure you have an energy-efficient electric water heater. If you need a new one, MLEC is a great source of information on the best models. Plus, you might be eligible for a rebate!
- Add an insulated blanket to your water heater. Insulating pipes going into and out of the tank and sealing holes around them can add up to savings as well.
- Your dishwasher releases the same amount of water whether it is full or not, so run it only when full. This two-for-one tip saves water and energy.
- Wash and rinse full loads of clothes in the coolest water possible to save on water heating costs. Also, stop the dryer as soon as clothes are dry. Over-drying wastes energy and sets in wrinkles. Who needs that?



## OTHER TIPS:

- Turn off lights, TVs, game systems, computers, and radios if not in use. Little things can make a big difference. Power strips with an "on/off" switch can help.
- Use LED or CFL bulbs to save big on lighting costs.
- Use the microwave when possible. It's faster and uses less energy.

# INDOOR *and* OUTDOOR ELECTRICAL SAFETY

## OUTDOOR SAFETY:

- **Downed Power Line:** Always assume that the line is energized. Touching it could be fatal. Report the downed line to MLEC.
- **Before You Dig:** Be aware of underground utilities before excavating, grading, boring, blasting, or demolition? Call MLEC before you start.
- **Shock:** Never touch someone who is being shocked. You could be shocked or killed by touching them.
- **Map It Out:** Locate overhead power lines, and map out ways to avoid them when moving equipment and using ladders.
- **Keep Out:** Stay clear of substations. The equipment inside is dangerous!
- **Do Not Touch:** Besides being illegal, tampering with an electric meter can be dangerous. It can electrocute you.
- **Auto Accidents:** When power lines are involved, it is best to stay inside the vehicle and wait for help. Since you can't tell by looking at a power line if it is energized, stepping outside the vehicle can lead to tragic results.



## INDOOR SAFETY:

- Check to see that lamp cords and extension cords aren't cracked, frayed or covered by rugs or furniture.
- Check light bulbs to determine that the wattage is appropriate for lighting fixtures.
- Electrical appliances should be kept away from damp and hot surfaces and have appropriate air circulation.
- Dim or flickering lights, arcs or sparks, sizzling or buzzing sounds from your electrical systems, hot switch plates and loose plugs are signs of potential wiring hazards and should be looked at by a qualified electrician.



# GENERATOR SAFETY

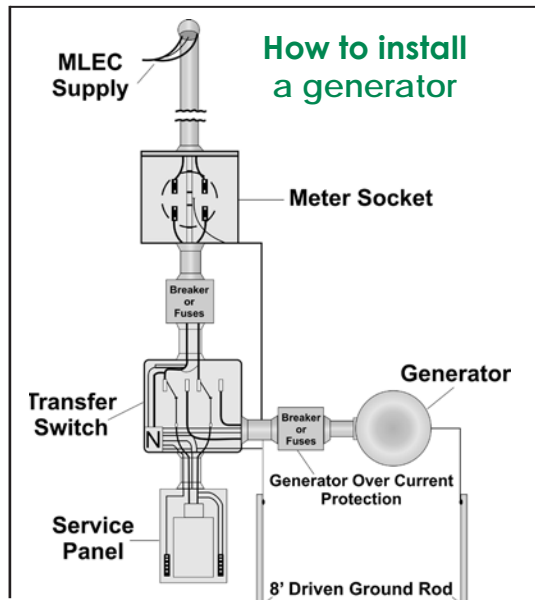
**How can electrocution occur?** If a portable electric generator is connected to your home's wiring system, the energy it generates can flow back into MLEC's power lines and electrocute lineworkers or others who come in contact with the lines.

**How can it be prevented?** Have a qualified, licensed electrician install a double-pole, double-throw transfer switch between the generator and utility power in compliance with state and local electrical codes. Also, for lineworker safety, let MLEC know if you have a generator.

**Why does it have to be inspected?** It's the law. Tennessee law requires a state wiring inspector approve any additions or changes to the wiring in your home. Installing a home transfer switch falls into that category.

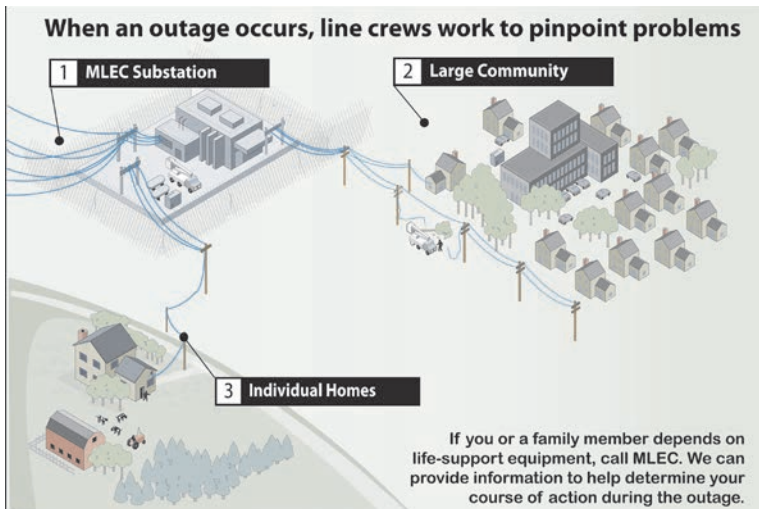
## Other hazards:

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for safe operation and maintenance. Never use a generator indoors or in partially-enclosed areas, even with ventilation. Opening doors and windows or using fans will not prevent carbon monoxide build-up in the home.
- Plug appliances directly into the generator, and make sure it is properly grounded. It should only be used to power essential equipment.
- Never power the house wiring by plugging the generator into a wall outlet. This presents an electrocution risk to utility workers and neighbors served by the same utility transformer. It also bypasses some of the built-in household circuit protection devices.
- Never store generator fuel in the home. Gasoline and other flammable liquids should be stored outside in properly labeled, non-glass safety containers. Also, turn off the generator and let it cool down before fueling.



# POWER OUTAGES

Providing electricity is MLEC's core business. We take pride in our system and continually upgrade and improve equipment to ensure safe, reliable power. However, circumstances beyond our control (such as ice, snow and thunderstorms) can cause power outages.



When you report an outage, MLEC uses the information to pinpoint the problem area, estimate how many people are affected and determine possible causes. Then, linemen are quickly dispatched and jump into restoration mode. Often, they are on the road as other outage calls are received. It is important to understand that this means the first person to report an outage is not always the first person to have power restored. If we went to specific homes first, we could miss isolated damages, possibly lengthening outage time for the initial caller and everyone else as well.

The priority of power outage restoration is to get the greatest number of people back on as quickly and safely as possible. Therefore, MLEC follows a repair plan that many utilities execute. Allowances sometimes have to be made; however, the standard plan is as follows:

1. The main distribution line from the substation must be fixed before anyone can have power. This is our first step because it goes directly to the main power source. If a problem is detected and corrected there, power can be restored to thousands of people at one time.
2. Next, we work out from the substation, correcting problems as we go. Crews fix the lines that bring power to the greatest number of people in a community.
3. After larger groups of members have had power restored, crews fix service lines to individual homes.

# SCHEDULE *of* RULES & REGULATIONS

## **1. Application for Service.**

Each prospective Member desiring electric service shall be required to sign Cooperative's standard form of application for service or contract before service is supplied by the Cooperative. (Policy Bulletin 4.15)

## **2. Deposit.**

A deposit or suitable guarantee approximately equal to twice the highest monthly bill may be required of any Member before electric service is supplied. For residential class customers, a credit rating from a previous electric utility acknowledging good credit may be considered in lieu of a security deposit. Upon termination of service, deposit may be applied by Cooperative against unpaid bills of Member, and if any balance remains after such application is made, said balance shall be refunded to Member. (PB 4.15 & Operating Bulletin 8.25)

## **3. Point of Delivery.**

The point of delivery is the point, as designated by the Cooperative, on Member's premises where electricity is to be delivered to building or premises. All wiring and equipment beyond this point of delivery shall be provided and maintained by Member at no expense to Cooperative. (PB 4.15)

## **4. Customer's Wiring – Standards.**

All wiring of Member must conform to State Electrical and Cooperative requirements and accepted modern standards, as specified in the current edition of the National Electric Code. (OB 8.2)

## **5. Inspections.**

Cooperative shall have the right, but shall not be obligated, to inspect any installation before electricity is introduced or at any later time, and shall reserve the right to reject any wiring or appliances not in accordance with Cooperative's standards; but such inspection or failure to inspect or reject shall not render Cooperative liable or responsible for any loss or damage resulting from defects in the installation, wiring, or appliances, or from violations of Cooperative's rules or from accidents which may occur upon Member's premises. (OB 8.2)

## **6. Member's Responsibility for Cooperative's Property.**

All service connections and other equipment furnished by Cooperative shall be, and remain, the property of Cooperative. Member shall provide a space for and exercise proper care to protect the property of Cooperative on its premises, and in the event of loss or damage to Cooperative's property arising from neglect of Member to care for same, the cost of the necessary repairs or replacements shall be paid by Member. (PB 4.15)



# SCHEDULE *of* RULES & REGULATIONS *cont.*

## **7. Right of Access.**

Cooperative's identified employees and authorized representatives shall have access to Member's premises at all reasonable times for the purpose of reading meters, testing, repairing, removing, or exchanging any or all equipment belonging to Cooperative. Cooperative also has the right to maintain the Right of Way for all cooperative equipment. (PB 4.15)

## **8. Billing.**

Bills will be rendered monthly and shall be paid at the office of Cooperative or at other locations designated by Cooperative. Failure to receive bill will not release Member from payment obligation. When bills are not be paid by due date specified on the bill, the Cooperative may, after following current Cooperative policies, disconnect service. Bills paid after due date specified on bill may be subject to additional charges. Should the due date of the bill fall on day that the Cooperative office is closed (ex. Weekend, holiday, Cooperative training day) the business day next following the due date will be held as a day or grace for delivery of payment. (PB 4.1)

## **9. Discontinuance of Service by Cooperative.**

Cooperative may refuse to connect or may discontinue service for violation of any of its Rules and Regulations, for violation of any of the provisions of the Schedule of Rates and Charges or of the application of Member, or for violation of the contract with Member. Cooperative may discontinue service to Member for the theft of current or the appearance of current theft devices on the premises of Member. The discontinuance of service by Cooperative for any causes as stated in this rule does not release Member from his obligation to Cooperative for the payment of minimum bills as specified in application of Member or contract with Member. (PB 4.4, OB 8.3 & 8.8)

## **10. Connection, Reconnection, Disconnection Charges.**

Cooperative may establish and collect standard charges to cover the reasonable average cost, including administration, of connecting or reconnecting service or disconnecting service as provided above. Higher charges may be established and collected when connections and reconnections are performed after normal office hours, or when special circumstances warrant. (OB 8.25)

## **11. Termination of Contract by Member.**

Members who have fulfilled their contract terms & wish to discontinue service must give written notice per the contract to that effect, unless contract specifies otherwise. Notice to discontinue service prior to expiration of contract term will not relieve Member from any minimum or guaranteed payment under any contract or rate.



# SCHEDULE *of* RULES & REGULATIONS *cont.*

## **12. Service Charges for Temporary Service.**

Members requiring electric service on a temporary basis shall be required by Cooperative to pay all costs for connection and disconnection incidental to the supplying and removing of temporary service. Charges for temporary service that will result in permanent service, will be added to the cost of providing permanent service. This rule applies to circuses, carnivals, fairs, temporary construction, and the like. (PB 4.15)

## **13. Interruption of Service.**

Cooperative will use reasonable diligence in supplying current, but shall not be liable for breach of contract in the event of loss, injury, or damage to persons or property resulting from interruptions in service, excessive or inadequate voltage, single-phasing, or otherwise unsatisfactory service.

## **14. Shortage of Electricity.**

In the event of an emergency or other condition causing a shortage in the amount of electricity for Cooperative to meet the demand on its system, Cooperative may, by an allocation method deemed equitable by Cooperative, fix the amount of electricity to be made available for use by Member and/or may otherwise restrict the time during which Member may make use of electricity and the uses which Member may make of electricity. If such actions become necessary, Member may request a variance because of unusual circumstances including matters adversely affecting the public health, safety and welfare. If Member fails to comply with such allocation or restriction, Cooperative may take such remedial actions as it deems appropriate under the circumstances including temporarily disconnecting electric service and charging additional amounts because of the excess electricity. The provisions of the section entitled Interruption of Service of this Schedule of Rules and Regulations are applicable to any such allocation or restriction.

## **15. Voltage Fluctuations caused by Member.**

Electric service must not be used in such a manner as to cause unusual fluctuations or disturbances to Cooperative's system. Cooperative may require Member, at his own expense, to install suitable apparatus which will reasonably limit such fluctuations.

## **16. Additional Load.**

The service connection, transformers, meters, and equipment supplied by Cooperative for each Member have definite capacity, and no addition to the equipment or load connected thereto will be allowed except by consent of Cooperative. Failure to give notice of additions or changes in load, and to obtain Cooperative's consent for same, shall render Member liable for any damage to any of Cooperative's lines or equipment caused by the additional or changed installation.

# SCHEDULE of RULES & REGULATIONS *cont.*

## **17. Standby & Resale Service.**

All purchased electric service (other than emergency or standby service) used on the premises of Member shall be supplied exclusively by Cooperative, and Member shall not, directly or indirectly, sell, sublet, assign, or otherwise dispose of the electric service or any part thereof. (Membership Application)

## **18. Notice of Trouble.**

Member shall notify Cooperative immediately should their service become unsatisfactory for any reason, or should there be any defects, trouble, or accidents affecting the supply of electricity. Such notices, if verbal, should be confirmed in writing.

## **19. Non-Standard Service.**

Member shall pay the cost of any special installation necessary to meet his peculiar requirements for service at other than standard voltage regulation than required by standard practice.

## **20. Meter Tests.**

Cooperative will, at its own expense, make periodical tests and inspections of its meters in order to maintain a high standard of accuracy. Cooperative will make additional tests or inspections of its meters at the request of Member. If tests, made at Members request show that the meter is accurate within two percent (2%), slow or fast, no adjustment will be made in Members bill, and Cooperative's standard testing charge shall be paid by member. If testing shows meter to be in excess of two percent (2%) fast or slow, an adjustment shall be made in Member's bill over a period of not over thirty (30) days prior to date of such test, and cost of making test shall be borne by Cooperative. (PB 4.13)

## **21. Relocations of Outdoor Lighting Facilities.**

Cooperative shall, at the request of Member, relocate or change existing Cooperative owned equipment if Cooperative deems such relocation is reasonably possible. Member shall reimburse Cooperative for such changes at actual cost including appropriate overheads.

## **22. Billing Adjusted to Standard Periods.**

The basic service charge for set forth in the rate schedules are based on billing periods of approximately one month. In the case of the first billing of new accounts (temporary service, cotton gins, grain bins, and other seasonal customer excepted) and final billings of all accounts (temporary service excepted) where the period covered by the billing involves fractions of a month, basic service charge will be adjusted to a basis proportionate with the period of time during which service is extended.

# SCHEDULE *of* RULES & REGULATIONS *cont.*

## 23. Scope

This Schedule of Rules and Regulations is a part of all contracts for receiving electric service from Cooperative, and applies to all services received from Cooperative, whether the service is based upon contract, agreement, signed application, or otherwise. A copy of this schedule, together with a copy of Cooperative's Schedule of Rates and Charges, shall be kept open to inspection at the offices of Cooperative. (PB 4.17)

## 24. Revisions.

These Rules and Regulations may be revised, amended, supplemented, or otherwise changed from time to time, without notice. Such changes, when effective, shall have the same force as the present Rules and Regulations.

## 25. Conflict.

In case of conflict between any provision of any rate schedule and the Schedule of Rules and Regulations, the rate schedule shall apply.

If you have an issue or complaint that you have been unable to resolve with MLEC, TVA's Complaint Resolution Process may provide assistance.

Methods of contact:

**Online:** [www.tva.com/complaintresolution](http://www.tva.com/complaintresolution)

**Email:** [complaintresolution@tva.gov](mailto:complaintresolution@tva.gov)

**Phone:** 1-888-289-8409



**MLEC**

Your Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup>  
Cooperative



# IMPORTANT NUMBERS *to* REMEMBER

**District I - Hickman County: 931-729-3558**

1625 Hwy. 100  
Centerville, TN 37033

**District II - Lewis County: 931-796-3116**

28 Park Avenue South  
Hohenwald, TN 38462

**District III - Perry County: 931-589-2151**

218 East Main  
Linden, TN 37096

**District IV - Humphreys County: 931-296-2581**

200 East Commerce Street  
Waverly, TN 37185

**District V - Houston County: 931-289-3311**

4574 West Main Street  
Erin, TN 37061

**MLEC Office Hours:**

All offices are open 7:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday.  
Pay by phone anytime.

**Outage reporting for after-hours & holidays:  
1-888-879-6038**

My MLEC Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Bill Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Cut-Off Date: \_\_\_\_\_

[www.mlec.com](http://www.mlec.com)