



# Plugged in to Altamaha EMC | Fiber

*Serving: Toombs, Montgomery, Emanuel, Treutlen, Laurens, Johnson and Tattnall*



## Know the signs of a scam

It's no secret that consumers with a water, gas or electricity connection have long been targets for utility scams, but fraudsters have changed their tactics since the Covid-19 pandemic. As consumers became more reliant on technology for work, school and commerce, scammers noted these shifts and adapted their tactics to this changed environment.

Imposter scams are the number one type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission. While scam artists may come to your door posing as a utility worker who works for the "power company," in today's more connected world, attempts are more likely to come through an electronic device, via email, phone or text.

### Common Types of Scams

A scammer may claim you are overdue on your electric bill and threaten to disconnect your service if you don't pay immediately. Whether this is done in-person, by phone, text or email, the scammers want to scare you into immediate payment so you don't have time to think clearly.

If this happens over the phone, simply hang up. If you're concerned about your bill, call us at 912-526-8181. Our phone number can also be found on your monthly bill and on our website at [www.altamahaemc.com](http://www.altamahaemc.com). If the scam is by email or text, delete it before taking any action. If you're unsure about any message you get claiming to be from Altamaha EMC, you can always contact us to check the status of your account.

Some scammers may falsely claim you have been overcharged on your bill and say they want to give a refund. It sounds easy. All you have to do is click or press a button to initiate the process. If you proceed, you will be prompted to provide banking or other personal information. Instead of money going into your bank account, the scammers can drain your account and use personal information such as a social

security number for identity theft.

If this "refund" scam happens over the phone, just hang up and block the phone number to prevent future robocalls. If this scam attempt occurs via email (known as a "phishing" attempt) or by text ("smishing"), do not click any links. Instead, delete it, and if possible, block the sender. When in doubt, contact us.

**SCAM  
ALERT!**

### Defend Yourself Against Scams

Be wary of call or texts from unknown numbers. Be suspicious of an unknown person claiming to be a utility worker who requests banking or other personal information.

Never let anyone into your home that you don't know unless you have a scheduled appointment or reported a problem. Altamaha EMC employees wear uniforms marked with our logo and carry company ID badges. When we perform work on our members' property or come into your home, our employees are professionals and will always identify themselves.

We want to help protect our community against utility scams, and you can help create the first line of defense. Please report any potential scams to us so we can spread the word to prevent others in the community from falling victim.

# Power Restoration: Lessons Learned from Line Crews

**Y**ou can learn a lot about power outages and restoration by watching, from a safe distance of course, a utility crew at work.

The first thing you'll notice is the deliberate, careful pace. They deploy signs to alert motorists. They mark the work area with orange cones. Always in hardhats and fire-protective clothing, anyone working on a power line pulls on heavy rubber gloves and spreads insulating blankets over the wires. Those gloves they pulled on have been tested by a machine that blows air into them to make sure there's not even a pinhole that could allow a deadly electric current to pass through.

And there's more you won't see. That morning, they likely huddled at the back of a truck to discuss what each of them would be doing that day, with an emphasis on safety. It's a best practice in the industry—so common it's often called a "tailgate meeting" or "toolbox talk."

## Making safety a habit

There are a lot of reasons your electricity might go off, with weather by far the leading cause. But to a lineworker, all power outage repairs have one thing in common—safety.

Safety is common sense, as people want to get home alive, after all. But it's also drilled into the utility workers. In their pole-climbing contests, the fastest time will get disqualified with the slightest safety misstep. Co-op leadership makes it clear that skipping any safety measure or procedure is a firing offense. Line crews attend lectures aimed at driving home the importance of safety protocols.

So, if you ever wonder why restoring electricity after an outage can take a while, there's a good answer: Line crews never compromise on safety.

The next thing you can learn from watching a line crew at work comes from seeing what task they're doing. There's a good chance they're replacing old equipment. Poles and transformers wear out, and failing equipment is one significant cause of power outages. The crew you watch might be restoring an equipment outage, or they might be switching out an old device to prevent a future outage.

You might see them replacing a downed utility pole, a painstaking process of removing the old, and hauling in and raising the new, using trucks specifically designed for the job.

## Trees vs. power lines

A utility pole might be down because a motorist ran into it, which is another cause of outages, or it could be weather-related. Natural disasters like wind, ice and fires cause about 80% of power outages. One characteristic of those natural disasters is that the damage can be widespread. If one pole is down, lots of others could be as well. That means crews will be repeating the pole-replacement process one job at a time. That's why bringing the lights back on after a major storm with widespread outages can take days, or even weeks.

It's also likely the crew you're watching will be trimming trees. Trees are beautiful, but a common cause of outages as wind and nearby branches can lead to wires getting knocked to the ground. Electric cooperatives devote a lot of time and resources to urging and enforcing limits on planting anything too close to power lines. And crews regularly set up to trim limbs that get too close to the wires.

One fairly common cause of outages you probably won't learn about by watching a crew make repairs is wildlife. Squirrels and other critters routinely crawl around utility equipment, occasionally making a connection between high-voltage wires. Snakes that slither into an electric substation bring consequences, both for them and the utility company. Sometimes, crews need to investigate and correct the cause. Often the system will reset itself after only a brief power interruption.

So, what lessons can we learn from lineworkers? Outages can be caused by a variety of factors. Restoring power is an intricate process in a complex utility system. And safety—for crews and the community—will always be the top priority.



**Whether the lights go out because of weather or squirrels, safety comes first for lineworkers.**

# UNCASHED REFUND CHECKS

Below is a list of former Altamaha EMC members who have uncashed refund checks. If your name appears on the list below, please contact us at 912-526-2120 before August 1, 2022. If these checks aren't claimed by August 1, 2022, we will deliver the funds to the Georgia Department of Revenue, Unclaimed Property Program as required by law. After this date, any attempts to reclaim your money will need to be directed to the Georgia Department of Revenue.

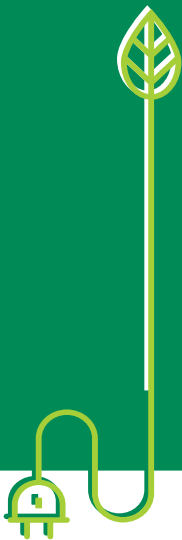
Aldrich, Jessica Brooke	Hernandez, Anna A	Northern, Gregory
Alvarado, Deidra Nicole	Hill, Nicole	Oliver, Heather
Amin, Akilah Takiyah	Hodges, Charles McKinley Jr	Osterbuhr, Myra E
Andrews, Alease	Holloway, Yolette	Page, Vincent Sinclair
Baggett, Mallory Nicole	Hunt, William R	Parker, Kimberly
Beasley, Chadwick	Inlow, Clarissa Michae	Payne, Clyde F Jr
Boyd, Herbert	Jackson, Oshana L	Peebles, Zachary D
Branch, Kathy Suzanne	Jackson, Shawntia Taja	Phillips, Audrey C
Bullick, Scott Allen	Jackson, Vanessa Nicole	Phillips, Janie M
Byrd, Jessica	Johnson, Marcus	Phillips, Zachary William
Carpenter, Jerel L	Jones, Damian Christoper	Robinson, Elbert Lee
Carswell, Diamond L	Keene, Brandon Blake	Shivers, Karina Charlene
Chance, Jadaesha	Kirby, James Dwayne	Shivers, Lateresa Diane
Clark, Henry Lee	Libby, Quinton David	Smith, Alex Kyle
Curry, Julius	Mack, Breanna S	Smith, Inez
Daniels, John R	Marquez, Ashley R	Stafford, Elizabeth
Delgado, Maria	McNure, Lamar L	Strickland, Steve D
Ennis, Dylan C	Medders, Paige Dionne	Taylor, Debra
Farris, Sarah Katherine	Melton, Melissa C	Turner, Travis E
Figg, Matthew	Melvin, David A	Vanhorn, James A
Fleurent, Glenn	Mincey, Jacqueline	Vaughn, Danny J
Foreman, Keturah	Moore, Letitia	Villarreal, Abner
Francis, Jonathan C	Moreno, Johnny A	Walker, Jamie
Gaffney, Diamond D	Morris, Jonathan H	Wiggins, Candice Denise
Graham, Michael Lee	Morris, Kirisma	Youmans, Bonnie
Hand, Shirley	Neumans, Frankie Jim	
Harden, Lois	Noles, Willard Carl Jr	

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Did you know the combined use of large appliances like dishwashers, clothes dryers and washing machines accounts for the largest percentage of electricity use in the average U.S. home? Take small steps to save energy when using these appliances.

Only run full loads in the dishwasher, and thoroughly scrape food from dishes before loading. Dry towels and heavier cottons separate from lighter-weight clothing, and clean the lint screen after every use. Wash clothing in cold water to save energy used to heat water.

Source: EIA and DOE





# Check on your neighbors

Not everyone can afford central air conditioning system for their homes. And not everyone can tolerate the summer heat well enough to leave their air-conditioned homes for necessities like groceries. So keep an eye out this summer for neighbors who might be living without air conditioning or who are elderly or have medical conditions.

Medical experts say the following symptoms could mean your neighbor is suffering from a heat-related illness: confusion, fatigue or weakness, mail piling up outdoors when they're at home. Anyone can suffer from heat stroke if they get too hot or from dehydration if they don't drink enough water. But elderly or sick neighbors have a higher risk. If you can:

- Call or visit an at-risk neighbor twice a day.

- Invite the neighbor to stay with you in your air-conditioned home on the hottest days and even overnight if you have room.

- Remind your neighbor to drink plenty of water. Bring pitchers of cold water, lemonade and caffeine-free iced tea as gifts.

- Offer to do the grocery shopping for your neighbor or to drive him or her to the store.

- Find indoor events and community- or church-sponsored activities that the neighbor could participate in as a way to stay cool during the day.

- Know if your at-risk neighbor keeps pets inside.

If so, tend to the animals as well by filling water bowls frequently and making sure plenty of pet food is on hand.

Research shows that just about 17% of us check on neighbors during the summer. Make your family one that increases that statistic.



Always assume a downed power line is energized. Downed lines can energize the ground up to 35 feet away.



**ALTAMAHA**  
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# Member RECIPES

## BLT Pasta Salad

### Ingredients

- 1 lb. pasta (rigatoni, rotini, fusilli or bowtie)
- 2 tbsp. olive oil (You can add ranch dressing or a creamy peppercorn to give more flavor if desired).
- 1 red onion, sliced
- Kosher salt and pepper
- 8 slices cooked bacon, chopped
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 c. baby arugula

### Directions

Cook pasta per package directions. Meanwhile, heat oil in medium skillet on medium. Add onion and sauté until just tender. Transfer contents of skillet to large bowl. When pasta is cooked, drain well and rinse with cold water to cool the pasta. Add pasta to bowl with onion and 1/2 tsp each salt and pepper and toss to combine. Fold in bacon, tomatoes, and arugula. Fresh, cubed avocados make a delicious addition to this recipe, as would any sort of shredded or crumbled cheese. Top salad with cooked chicken to add some protein.

*-From the kitchen of Brandi Morris*

Each month, our newsletter features recipes submitted by our members. If you have a favorite recipe and would like to share it with other readers in the Altamaha EMC service area, send a copy, complete with name, address and daytime phone number to: Tammye Vaughn, Altamaha EMC, P.O. Box 346, Lyons, GA 30436. Each month, a recipe will be selected for publication. The member who submitted the featured recipe will be given a \$10 credit on their next Altamaha EMC bill. Due to limited space, not all recipes received will be featured. Recipes printed in *Plugged In* are not independently tested; therefore, we must depend on the accuracy of those members who send recipes to us.