

COLUMBUS CURRENTS

Outage Response Center

High Outage Call Volume & Hold Times

The Cooperative partnered with the Cooperative Response Center (CRC), a nationwide, cooperatively owned and operated, 24/7 contact center, in September 2018. This was done in an effort to assist with member service needs, including outage dispatching and around-the-clock customer care. Partnering with CRC provided additional resources to answer calls and dispatch line crews during outages. It also provided a way for our members to speak to a representative over the phone to obtain account information or pay their bill after hours. The service that CRC provides to us and our members in handling calls and dispatching crews has been very valuable.

The Cooperative is aware that recently members have been experiencing issues when calling the response center. The response center is seeing higher absenteeism along with difficulties in hiring new staff due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This became acute in May of this year when they started losing existing staff and were unable to find replacements. Since May, CRC is down 50% in staffing, including absenteeism. The situation has been compounded recently by the summer thunderstorms. Due to the staffing shortages and increased call volume due to storms our members are seeing longer wait times, more abandoned calls, and calls that can't complete in automation, resulting in a message to try the call again later. While we all know this is not a good customer experience, to answer more calls CRC is relying more on automation to handle call volume due to the shortage of employees.

Accordingly, when you are reporting an outage, please have your account number ready in the event that your phone number is not found in our database or if you have multiple accounts, improving the likelihood of reporting your outage successfully. In addition, we will notify CRC about the status of outages so they can inform callers with a recorded message greeting to ensure you know that we have been alerted to the situation and crews are out working.

Our partner has shared with us the many short-term as well as long-term solutions that are being implemented and hope to turn things around by late October or early November. We appreciate your patience and please know that Columbus Electric Cooperative and CRC are working together to give you the best service possible at this time.

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Cordless electric lawnmowers vs Gas lawnmowers

Cordless electric walk-behind lawn mowers certainly offer more flexibility than corded lawnmowers, but how do they compare to gasoline ran mowers?

Conventional lawnmowers operate using a gasoline fueled combustion engine. Cordless mowers, on the other hand, use an electric motor powered by a rechargeable lithium-ion battery.

Switching to an electric mower comes with a few benefits:

- *Easy maintenance*- no more engine maintenance such as changing spark plugs or adding engine oil and gasoline.
- *Safer*- no more storing gas in your shed that can be a potential fire hazard
- *Environmentally friendly*- Electric mowers don't generate carbon dioxide or other harmful emissions
- *Quieter operation*- Electric mowers produce 65 to 75 decibels of noise where gasoline mowers produce 95 to 100 decibels.

Cordless electric mowers do have some disadvantages. Depending on your usage, batteries usually run about an hour. If you have a large lawn to maintain, it may be wise to purchase multiple batteries. Electric mowers are more expensive to purchase than a gasoline mower but save more because they require minimal maintenance.

Don't forget if you recently purchased or plan to purchase an electric lawn mower you may qualify for a rebate. Get a rebate application online at columbusco-op.org or (800)950-2667.



Columbus
Electric Co-op
would like to
wish student's
good luck on a
new school year!

Education is the
most powerful
weapon which
you can use to
change the
world- *Nelson
Mandela*



Emergency Response Number
1-800-228-0579

Toll - free Office Number
1-800-950-COOP (2667)

www.columbusco-op.org