



# The CMP Senior Guidebook

*a resource for Maine's older citizens*

  
An Energy East Company

  
Central Maine Power  
Your Electricity Delivery Company

# How to reach CMP

**Outage Reporting Hotline** (24-hour number — have CMP account number handy)..... **1-800-696-1000**

**Customer Service** (for making payment arrangements)  
..... **1-800-686-4044**

**Customer Service** (for having power turned on/off, inquiring about usage, or reporting address changes)..... **1-800-750-4000**

**Corporate Switchboard**  
(Augusta)..... **1-800-565-0121**

**TDD number** (for the hearing impaired)..... **1-800-445-5631**

**CMP website**..... **www.cmpco.com**

**E-mail**..... **customer.service@cmpco.com**

## **The CMP Senior Guidebook** *a resource for Maine's older citizens*

At Central Maine Power, we realize that many of our best customers are among Maine's older citizens. That's why we've created this guide: your all-in-one resource for information on CMP's programs and related services.

Want to know who to call if you have difficulty paying your electric bill? Seven major myths about electrical safety? Tips for safety at home? It's all here, in one easy-to-read booklet. We hope you find it useful. For more information on any of the topics in this booklet, please feel free to call us at **1-800-750-4000**.

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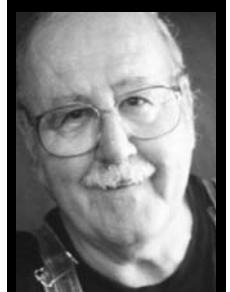
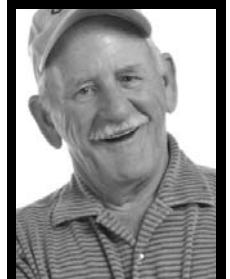
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# Looking out for you

Since our employees spend so much time on the job in local communities, CMP workers can act as extra “eyes and ears” during the course of our days. If someone needs assistance, they can count on us to help them get it. Here are some programs we have in place to be there for our customers:

## **Gatekeeper Program**

Many CMP employees see and talk to our customers every day, and sometimes we’re the first ones to notice when something is wrong. Our employees are trained to notice things like mail or newspapers piling up, a normally well-kept yard going untended, changes in a customer’s appearance or behavior, and more. They’ll keep an eye out, and find out what’s happening if something seems wrong. If help is needed, they can make referrals to the local Area Agency on Aging for services such as transportation, housekeeping, delivered meals, and many more. At CMP, we are part of the community and this program is one way for us to protect the safety and well-being of the people we serve. Any information received is kept confidential.

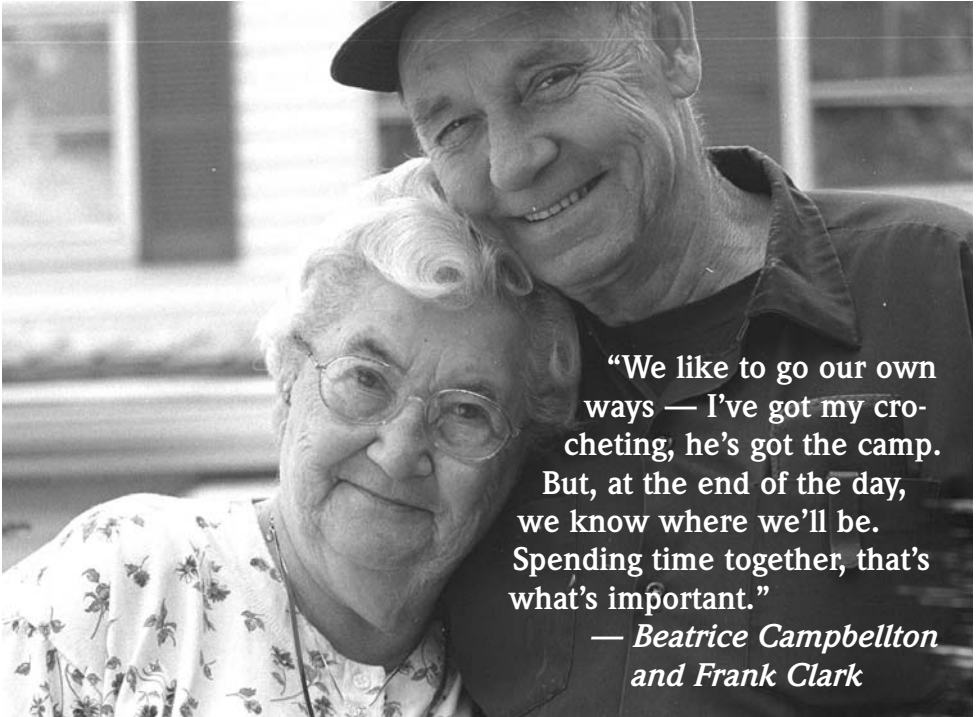
## **The LifeLight Program**

If you or a member of your household rely on life-sustaining equipment (for example, oxygen machines or electric intravenous pumps), you are eligible for our free LifeLight Program. To join, call **1-800-750-4000** (or **1-800-445-5631** if hearing impaired) and ask for a LifeLight form.

Your physician must complete this form, certifying that you require electricity for the equipment that has been prescribed. Your name will then be placed on an emergency list, and we will place LifeLight markers on your meter, and on a transformer near your home. Only CMP meter and line workers will recognize these markers, which will identify you as a LifeLight participant. In the event of a planned power outage (for repairs or maintenance), CMP will attempt to contact you in advance so that you can make plans for the outage. Of course, you should always keep back-up batteries to carry you through an extended power outage.

## Friend Alert Program

If you become ill, are away from home for an extended period, or are unable to handle your financial matters, you might neglect past-due bills. This could eventually lead to a cancellation of service.



“We like to go our own ways — I’ve got my crocheting, he’s got the camp. But, at the end of the day, we know where we’ll be. Spending time together, that’s what’s important.”

— *Beatrice Campbellton and Frank Clark*

That’s why we developed the Friend Alert Program — to help protect you from added problems during these times. The Friend Alert Program allows you to designate a third party (like a relative, friend, or neighbor) who will receive a duplicate copy of any CMP disconnection notice. This person can research the problem and prevent interruption of your service. This person will face no legal liability and will not be obligated to pay your bill. To apply for this program, call a Customer Service Representative at **1-800-750-4000**.

## When you are hospitalized

When you are confined to a hospital, you have enough to think about without worrying about your electric service. If you are hospitalized, have someone (i.e. a friend, relative, or hospital social worker) notify us. Once we are aware of the situation, we’ll work it out so you don’t have to be concerned about losing your electric service.

## **CMP employee identification**

All of our employees carry photo identification. Do not admit anyone claiming to be from CMP into your home unless they can produce the proper identification. If you are unsure of the situation, get the employee's name and call our Customer Relations Center at **1-800-750-4000** to verify employment. Since we do not normally collect payments door to door, be especially cautious about anyone asking for money who claims to represent CMP.

Anyone can have a little trouble paying their bills once in a while. Whether from an unexpected expense or the day-to-day challenge of living on a fixed income, tough times can happen to all of us. Both CMP and your local Area Agency on Aging have programs that might be useful to you. Below are some of the places to go to find some help.

# **Payment assistance**

Available from CMP:

## **Payment arrangements**

If you're concerned about being able to pay your CMP bill, contact a Customer Service Representative at **1-800-686-4044**.

These representatives are knowledgeable about CMP programs and other sources of assistance. They can also help you arrange payments so that your electric service will continue, and set up a future payment plan to bring your account back into balance.

## **SmartPower Payment Plan**

It's our way to help you take the surprises out of your CMP bills. If you dread the winter and the higher bills it can bring due to heating costs, this plan might be for you.

The SmartPower Payment Plan allows you to spread your payments evenly over the course of a year and pay the same

amount every month. It gives you one less thing to worry about during Maine's difficult winters. To apply, call a Customer Service Representative at **1-800-750-4000**.

Ask your Area Agency on Aging about:

- **Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP\*)**

This program provides qualified low-income customers with help in paying their heating bills. Payment guidelines are based on household size, income, type of housing, and fuel. HEAP is administered through Community Action Program (CAP) agencies throughout the state.

- **Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP\*)**

When funds are available, this program provides emergency assistance to low-income and elderly clients. This includes help in avoiding utility disconnections, furnace and other emergency repairs, one-time oil deliveries, and temporary housing. ECIP is also administered through Community Action Program (CAP) agencies throughout the State.

**“Keeping fit and staying healthy is important to me. Whether its going to the health club or playing golf, being active gives me energy and that makes me happy.”**

*— Paul Gregoire*



\*see phone numbers and addresses on pages 18 and 19.

- **Electricity Lifeline Program (ELP\*)**

The ELP Program is designed to help our lower-income customers with their electric bills. The amount of assistance is based on the total household income and estimated electricity usage and cost. You end up with a bill that represents a more affordable percentage of your household income. You may qualify if you are a CMP customer, are eligible for the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) and do not live in subsidized housing. You can apply for ELP at your local Community Action Program (CAP) agency at the same time you apply for HEAP.

- **General Assistance**

Every town has a General Assistance program in place to help residents in emergency situations. Citizens of any city or town are eligible, but guidelines vary. Typically, funds are available for such expenses as rent, food, utility bills, medications, and other necessities. Applications are available at local town offices.

If you have problems concerning General Assistance, contact The Bureau of Family Independence, Maine Department of Human Services, at **287-2826 or 1-800-442-6003**.

- **Bundle-Up Program**

The Bundle-Up Program offers electric water heating customers a chance to save money and conserve energy. For \$20, we'll send a contractor to wrap your water heater and install pipe insulation, faucet aerators, and an energy-efficient showerhead. For \$10, we'll send you the products so you can do it yourself. To join the many customers already saving with Bundle-Up, call **1-800-750-4000**.

\*see phone numbers and addresses on pages 18 and 19.



# Safety tips for your home

## General Home

- As we age, we need more light to see properly. Add lights where you need them. You can boost the light in your house by either increasing the number of lights or increasing the wattage. Before increasing the wattage, check the instructions on your light fixtures.
- Make use of natural light. Open the shades and curtains to let as much natural light in as possible.
- Good lighting on stairways — inside and out — is very important. It is good to have a switch on the top and the bottom of each staircase — that way, you will never get caught in the dark. Also make sure that the light points directly on the stairs. Lights should be bright enough to light up the whole staircase.
- Enhance your lights where your family reads. Consider installing 3-way light bulbs so that different family members can adjust the light to their needs. Floor lamps are also helpful so that you can adjust the height and placement of the light as required.
- Avoid light fixtures that are difficult to clean or replace.
- Make sure you have smoke detectors on all floors of your home. The smoke detectors should have both battery and electrical power supplies.

## Entrances and Hallways:

- Lighting is very important in entrance ways and hallways. Make sure they are both fully lit including the entire hallway and the pathway from door to driveway. Bright lights help with your footing at night and can prevent intruders. Motion detectors are also a good nighttime deterrent.

## Bathroom:

- For your safety, make sure the temperature on your electric water heater is set at 120 degrees.

- Install an anti-scald device on your sink, tub and shower to make sure the water doesn't get too hot.

### **Bedroom:**

- Night lights in the bedroom, hallway and bathroom ensure you can see regardless of the time of night.
- A telephone in the bedroom allows easy access to police or the fire department in case of an emergency.

### **Kitchen:**

- Make sure the areas where you work most, like the sink and stove, are well lit. Lighting under the cabinets is an excellent way of ensuring the space is lit.

## **Electrical safety tips**

- Never place an electric appliance in water while it's plugged in. Wash it in water only if the manufacturer's directions say it is safe to do so.
- Never use an electric appliance where it could fall into a bathtub, toilet or sink. Stand in a dry place, with dry hands, whenever you use electric appliances.
- Turn off and disconnect any electric appliances that spark or stall, and have them repaired or replaced.
- Replace worn or frayed electrical cords immediately.
- Unplug appliances by tugging on the plug, not the cord.
- Do not run cords under carpets. They could become damaged and hazardous without your noticing.
- Never act as your own electrician. When you need help, call in an expert.

# Seven myths about electrical safety



Brad Kaherl, Gary Gertloff, and Jeff Quirk  
CMP Public Safety Coordinators

During our public speaking engagements, we often meet people who have heard some “popular wisdom” about electricity. Many times, these ideas are dangerously untrue. To help ensure your safety, we have listed below some of the more common misconceptions that we have heard. We hope you’ll take the time to review them. It might save your life.

## **Misconceptions:**

### *1. “Tires are electrical insulators.”*

Tires are electrical conductors, not insulators. It is true that you are safe in your vehicle when a live wire falls on it. But that’s because electricity always seeks the easiest path to the

ground. If you remain in the vehicle, the path of the electricity will be on the outside of the vehicle; run through the tires, and into the ground. As long as we do not provide a path to the ground through our body, the electricity will not enter it. So when an electrical wire falls on your vehicle, stay in your vehicle until help arrives and the power is shut off by CMP. If you have to get out of your car because of a life-threatening situation, jump out with both feet together, making sure that you are not touching any part of the vehicle when your feet hit the ground.

2. *“Power lines are insulated.”*

Ninety percent of outside power lines are *not* insulated. Further, the lines that are insulated are exposed to the rigors of Maine weather, so you never know what condition the insulation is in.

**No line is safe to touch...ever.**

3. *“Only high voltage is dangerous.”*

Voltage is the pressure that pushes electricity along, like water through a hose. Amperage (amp), the amount of electricity in any given spot, is what will hurt or kill you. It takes less than one quarter of one amp to put a heart into ventricular fibrillation (irregular beating). Most residents have at least 100-amp service coming into their house; many residents have 200-amp service.

4. *“When a wire falls to the ground, it automatically shuts off.”*

Often when a wire falls to the ground, it falls on materials that are poor conductors like snow, asphalt, or ledge. When this happens, our distribution system sees increased demand for electricity. Our system can't distinguish between an increase in demand for electricity caused by a break in the line or because many people in one area are coming home from work and turning on their electrical appliances. Our circuits are designed to

sense short circuits — sudden requests for unusual amounts of electricity. If this doesn't happen because the wire has fallen on a poor conductor, our line will remain energized. Always treat a downed wire as energized until CMP has shut it off.

5. *“When a live wire falls, it makes sparks.”*

A power line sparks if it falls to the ground and does not make firm contact with the ground or other material. When a wire falls to the ground and makes firm contact, it will often make no noise or sparks, and will give the impression of being de-energized.

6. *“Wood is an insulator.”*

Wood is in fact a conductor, though not a good one. The molecules in wood are far apart so it becomes difficult for electricity to jump from molecule to molecule. But the higher the voltage, the easier it is for electricity to move through wood. And if the wood is damp, it changes the equation and wood becomes a good conductor, even at low voltage. So be careful standing on a wooden crate to turn on your main fuse box or when you use a wooden ladder.

7. *“Household rubber gloves or rubber-soled shoes insulate.”*

Only 100 percent pure rubber insulates against electricity. Household gloves and shoes are not made of pure rubber. Often to make these shoes more marketable and durable, additives are mixed in with the rubber-like material and this makes gloves and shoes conductors.

# When the power goes out

- Look up and down your street — see if the neighbors' lights are out too.
- If the neighbors' lights are on, check your fuses and circuit breakers. The problem may be a blown fuse or a tripped circuit breaker in your building.
- Call CMP's hotline to report an outage: **1-800-696-1000** (for billing and other questions, call **1-800-750-4000**). In the event of a major outage, your call may be answered by an automated system, which will report your outage to the nearest service center. This efficient system is necessary to allow many people to report outages at once. Without it, customers would get annoying busy signals.

## During a storm

- Look out for live wires! If you see electrical wires on the ground or hanging from poles, stay clear — they could be live. Be sure you call CMP right away. Remember, no line is safe to touch...ever!
- If you use a generator, have it installed by an electrician or someone equally expert about generators. Never run a generator inside your home, even with a door or window open, to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Never keep your generator connected to CMP's power supply (for example, by plugging it into a wall outlet), as this can feed energy back onto "dead" lines, causing serious injury or death to our line workers.
- A wire on your car? Stay put. Wait until a CMP or law-enforcement official can make sure the line is not energized. If your car catches fire, jump clear without touching the car and the ground at the same time. This will help you avoid a serious electrical shock.
- Turn off and unplug all major electrical appliances.

- Leave one light or radio on so you'll know when power is restored.

### **When it's a long outage**

- Bundle up and stay dry.
- Do not open the refrigerator or freezer unless absolutely necessary. If the outage lasts more than a few hours, cover them with blankets or old newspapers to keep in the cold.
- Take a helping hand from nature: cold outdoor weather can keep food cold. Put food outside, out of direct sunlight. If it's below freezing, only put food that can be frozen outside. Use wood or metal containers.



**“It’s a special time when I’m with my granddaughters.  
I think they really have fun catching sunfish with their Grampy.”**

**— Raymond Ames  
with granddaughters  
Alexis & Breanna Ames**

- Use water sparingly.
- If it's cold out and the heat is off for a long time, wrap water pipes with insulation or newspaper. In very cold weather, let faucets drip or drain pipes to avoid freezing.

How does CMP restore power? As quickly and safely as possible. However, the electrical distribution network is complex. Often in large-scale emergencies, we have to repair our larger transmission and distribution lines before we can repair the lines in your neighborhood. If these major lines are not in working order, your home won't get electricity even if we fix the wires on your street.

It is difficult to predict how long it will take to complete large-scale repairs, so it is always a good idea to keep back-up batteries and to develop a plan to stay with relatives or friends if necessary.

### **Things to keep on hand**

- Flashlights and battery-powered radios, loaded with batteries. Keep extra batteries nearby.
- Candles, oil lamps, and matches.
- Drinking water in bottles or plastic containers.
- Extra blankets and warm clothes — layering clothing can keep you warm.
- Fire safety equipment — fire extinguishers, baking soda, heavy blankets.
- Canned or dried foods that need no refrigeration and little or no cooking. Don't forget a manual can opener.
- Plans for emergency heating and cooking.



**Hypothermia:** know the signs, avoid the danger. Hypothermia is a dangerous medical condition that can strike when the body temperature falls to or below 95°F. This is most likely to happen on cold, windy days, but can happen when air temperatures are as warm as 60°. Older adults are the most susceptible to hypothermia, since they are less able to adapt to extreme temperatures.

Here's how you can avoid this deadly condition:

- Dress for warmth.
- Stay dry.
- Watch your nutrition.
- Stay in touch. Call a friend and have them call you every day during very cold weather.
- Talk to your doctor about the risk of hypothermia.

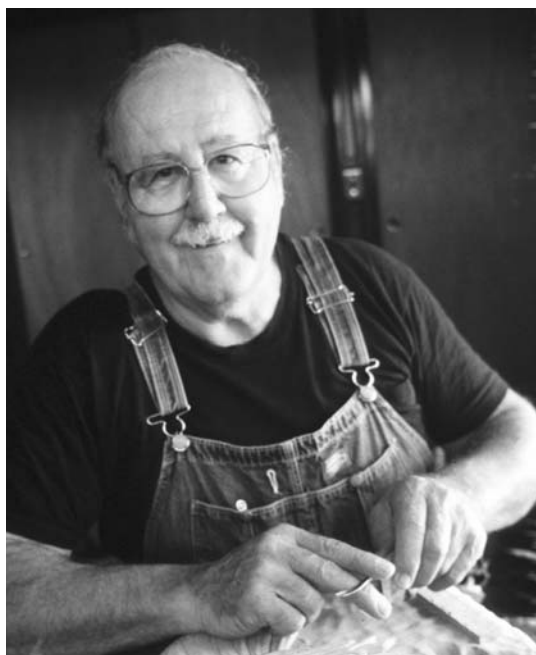
### **Hypothermia warning signs**

- Confusion or forgetfulness
- Difficulty speaking
- Shivering and slow breathing
- Sleepiness and difficulty waking
- Cold skin, especially on the stomach
- Trembling on one side of the body or in one leg or arm
- Cold, stiff muscles and a puffy face
- Clumsiness and unusual irritability

# CMP publications for you

- The Energy Guide: Understanding your energy use at home
- Lighting Tips Brochure
- The Storm Guide
- Safety Tips Brochure
- Electric Space Heat Fact Sheet
- Dehumidifier Fact Sheet
- Electric Water Heater Fact Sheet
- Air Conditioner Fact Sheet

To order these booklets, see the CMP website at <http://www.cmpco.com>, or call **1-800-750-4000**.



**“I’ve never been one to sit around. As long as there’s something to be made, I expect I’ll be making it. I’m happy just as long as I’m working with my hands.”**

**— *Rene Pomerleau***

# Other useful publications

Resource Directory for Older People in Maine

This publication offers a complete guide to services available to older citizens.

Home Care: Where to Find It

Aging: Taking Care of Business

This guide offers advice for older people, families, and friends.

**To request copies, contact any Area Agency on Aging, or:**

Maine Bureau of Elder and Adult Services

State House Station #11

35 Anthony Ave.

Augusta, ME, 04333-0011

624-5335

FAX: 624-5361

TTY: 1-888-720-1925

## Area Agencies on Aging

Services and programs available to Maine's older citizens include:

- Adult day care
- Advocacy for Medicare patients
- Care management
- Consumer fraud assistance
- Educational opportunities
- Employment and training
- Health screening
- Home-delivered meals
- In-home care
- Legal services
- Housing assistance for owners and renters, heating

repairs, subsidized rental, property tax and rent refund

- Heating
- Low-cost drugs
- Telephone installation credit
- Transportation
- Volunteer opportunities

If you have questions about these services or any others, contact your local Area Agency on Aging. If they're not able to help you, they still might refer you to someone who can. Many services are offered to low-income individuals at no charge, and the fee for many varies according to your income.

**Eastern Agency on Aging  
(Hancock, Penobscot, Piscataquis,  
and Washington Counties)**

450 Essex Street  
Bangor, ME 04401  
941-2865  
1-800-432-7812 (Toll-free)

**Senior Spectrum  
(Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc,  
Somerset, and Waldo Counties)**

P.O. Box 2589  
1 Western Court  
Augusta, ME 04338-2589  
622-9212  
1-800-639-1553 (Toll-free)

**Southern Maine Area Agency on Aging  
(Cumberland and York Counties)**

136 U.S. Route 1  
Scarborough, ME 04074  
396-6500

1-800-427-7411 (Toll-free)

**Western Area Agency on Aging  
(Androscoggin, Franklin, and Oxford Counties)**

P.O. Box 659

8 Falcon Road

Lewiston, ME 04240

795-4010

1-800-427-1241 (Toll-free)

## **Community Action Programs**

Many energy assistance, home weatherization or repair, tax and rent refund, transportation, and food programs are available to low-income customers at no charge through the Community Action Program (CAP) agencies. Contact the one nearest you for further information.

### **Coastal Community Action Program**

P.O. Box 808

4 Union Street

Rockland, ME 04841

596-0361

### **Coastal Economic Development**

34 Wing Farm Parkway

Bath, ME 04530

1-800-221-2221 (Toll-free)

### **Community Concepts**

P.O. Box 278

South Paris, ME 04281

743-7716

**Kennebec Valley  
Community Action Program**

97 Water Street  
Waterville, ME 04901  
859-1500

219 Cony Road  
Augusta, ME 04330  
622-4761

26 Mary Street  
Skowhegan, ME 04976  
474-8487  
1-800-542-8227 (Toll-free)

**Penquis  
Community Action Program**

P.O. Box 1162  
262 Harlow Street  
Bangor, ME 04402-1162  
973-3630

**Peoples Regional  
Opportunity Program**

510 Cumberland Avenue  
Portland, ME 04101  
1-800-698-4959 (Toll-free)

**Coastal Community Action Program**

PO Box 808  
4 Union Street  
Rockland, ME 04841  
596-0361

## **Waldo Community**

### **Action Partners**

P.O. Box 130

9 Field Street, Suite 303

Belfast, ME 04915

338-3025

1-800-498-3025 (Toll-free)

## **Washington-Hancock**

### **Community Action**

P.O. Box 299

Ellsworth, ME 04605

664-2424

## **Western Maine**

### **Community Action, Inc.**

P.O. Box 200

East Wilton, ME 04234

645-3764

1-800-645-9636

## **York County**

### **Community Action Corporation**

P.O. Box 72

6 Spruce Street

Sanford, ME 04073

324-5762

1-800-965-5762



**Central Maine Power**  
*Your Electricity Delivery Company*

0507-0552-Cohber-10M