



Eric Mahugh's favorite thing about his job is his co-workers. That's also what Eric, electric transmission specialist at NorthWestern Energy, misses most while working from home during the coronavirus pandemic.

"I have great co-workers," said Eric, who's been with NorthWestern almost nine years. "Working from home, you take for granted not seeing everyone every day."

As an electric transmission specialist, Eric makes sure the right customer gets billed for the electricity that flows across NorthWestern's transmission lines. These customers aren't residential customers; they're typically large industrial customers and energy traders.

Eric works in a smaller office with about 30 people, and they're a tight-knit group. A few years ago, they started doing office barbecues. Eric has enjoyed grilling since he was a kid and is now known across the company for the delicious steaks he makes.

Eric also works part time during hunting season with a local butcher helping to process wild game.

Eric shared lots of tips for grilling, but perhaps his most important advice is to have fun.

"If you're grilling, typically it's nice out," he said. "We don't have a lot of time in Montana to be in the backyard, so invite friends and family over and enjoy it."

In this time of COVID, grilling has some extra perks.

"It's a good way to social distance in a backyard," Eric said. "You can stay away from people but still get together."

Eric's grilling tips

What's the best cut of meat for grilling?

Eric's favorite is a ribeye. "It's got some nice marbling in it," he explained.

Other good options include:

- New York strip – it's a leaner cut of meat, but it has a strip of fat on the outside.
- T-Bone – it's a New York strip with the bone intact.
- Porter house – it's a larger T-Bone with a bigger piece of tenderloin.

If you're not sure what to pick, ask a local butcher. "They'll be happy to help," Eric said.

What do grades of meat mean?

Prime is the highest grade. You won't find it very often in a regular grocery store. Sometimes Costco carries prime cuts.

Choice is what you'll most likely find in the grocery store. It has a nice amount of marbling.

Select is the least expensive. It won't have a lot of fat or marbling in it.

Is bone-in or boneless better?

Eric doesn't have a strong opinion here. He typically goes with boneless. However, with a prime rib, chose bone-in because you can grill it bone-side down.

You'll notice that bone-in options are typically cheaper, but that's because you're paying for the bone, which you're not going to eat.

"If you have a dog, that might be a good reason to opt for bone-in," Eric said.

Wood-fired grills

Wood-fired grills, such as Traegers, have become very popular.

"They're awesome," Eric said. "You won't want to go back to a regular barbecue once you use one."

However, the trick with a wood-fired grill is to cook meat long and slow.

"If you have the time, they're worth it," Eric said.

Dry rubs vs. marinade

Eric typically uses a dry rub. Alpine Touch, which is made in Montana, is his go-to. However, marinades are also a good choice and work well for specific dishes, such as fajitas.

Other grilling tips from Eric:

- Use a meat thermometer so you know exactly when your meat is done.
- Pre-heat your grill.
- Don't be afraid to flip things a few times.
- An ordinary bottle of water with a whole punched in the lid makes a great fire suppressor for flare ups.

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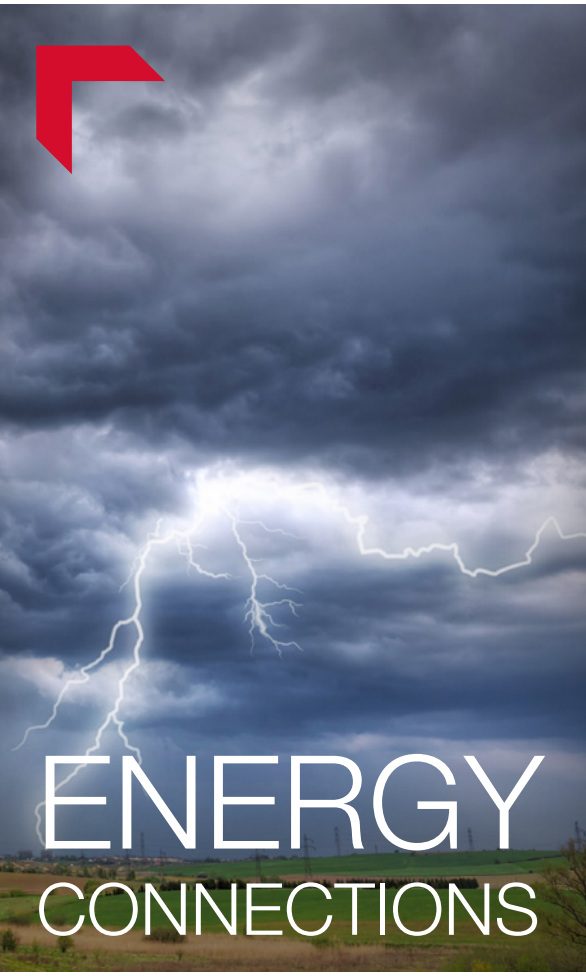
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We are proud of the diversity in the communities we serve. To better serve the needs of some of our customers, we translate important customer information into two languages: Spanish and Karen.

Estamos orgullosos de la diversidad en las comunidades que servimos. Para satisfacer mejor las necesidades de algunos de nuestros clientes, traducimos información importante del cliente a dos idiomas: español y karen.

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LOOK INSIDE FOR INFORMATION ON:

- What to do if your power goes out
- Downed power lines
- Natural gas safety
- Call 811
- Employee feature
- Grilling tips

What to do if your power goes out

Summer thunderstorms can lead to unexpected outages. Here are some important tips to help you and your family during an outage:

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed. An unopened refrigerator will keep foods cold for about 4 hours. A full freezer will keep the temperature for about 48 hours if the door remains closed.
- If it looks like the power outage will continue beyond a day, prepare a cooler with ice for your freezer items.
- Check fuses or circuit breakers to rule out problems with electricity inside your home. If a fuse is blown, replace it with the appropriate fuse. If a breaker has tripped, reset it from off to on. If you are unsure about fixing a fuse or circuit breaker, call an electrician.
- Check the media and social media. If the outage is widespread, you can usually monitor the outage restoration process by checking your local media outlets. You can also get up-to-date outage information from our online outage map at northwesternenergy.com/outage.
- Turn off all but one light, so you will notice when we have restored your electricity.
- Unplug computers, chargers, TVs, gaming consoles and other sensitive appliances to avoid possible damage when electricity is restored.
- When power resumes, reset clocks and check automatic alarms and timers. Plug in only essential items. Wait 10 minutes before connecting the remainder of your items to let the electrical system stabilize.
- Use a flashlight. Avoid candles because of the fire risk.
- Don't wire an emergency generator into your home. Back-feed from generators into power lines could injure or kill a lineman working to get electricity restored to your area. If you use a generator to power up a specific appliance, plug the appliance directly into the generator and make sure the generator is located outside so poisonous carbon monoxide fumes don't enter your home.

For more information about safety during outages, please visit northwesternenergy.com/safety/outagesafety



Stay away from downed power lines

If you see a downed or damaged power line, keep your distance and call us immediately. Never touch a power line or any object, including trees, that are in contact with a line. Remember:

- Keep people, equipment and objects at least 10 feet away from power lines.
- Never attempt to remove a fallen tree or branch from a power line. You could be seriously injured or killed.
- If a tree or branch does come in contact with a power line, keep yourself and others away from the tree and contact your utility company.

How to recognize and report natural gas safety concerns

Know how to detect a natural gas leak.

- Smell: Natural gas is odorless, so we add an odorant called mercaptan. It smells like rotten eggs or sulfur.
- Listen: A natural gas leak may make a hissing sound or even a roar.
- Look: A leak can send dust or debris flying. It will also produce bubbles under water and can lead to discolored vegetation.

If you detect a natural gas leak, leave the area immediately. Don't do anything that may cause a spark.

Once you are in a safe area, call the NorthWestern Energy emergency number to report a gas leak.



DIY project? Call 811

We've seen a sharp incline in pipeline and underground utility strikes this spring and summer. Even in this time of social distancing, calling 811 or visiting call811.com before you dig is essential. Remember:

- No project is too small. If it requires a shovel, call first.
- 811 is free.
- Even on your property and in your yard, damages can be expensive and even deadly.
- Call at least two full business days in advance.
- Markings are valid for 30 days. If your project is delayed or lasts longer, call again.