

Q: Is it okay to use an extension cord to permanently power an electrical appliance?

A: According to the National Electrical Code, flexible cords can't be used as a substitute for fixed wiring. They're designed for temporary use. Call an electrician to install an outlet instead.

Q: How are extension cords sized?

A: By the length of the cord and by wire size. Wire size is measured by wire gauge (AWG). The smaller the number, the larger the wire. A 12-gauge wire is larger than a 14-gauge wire and carries more power.

Q: What size cord do I need?

A: It should be sized to safely carry the electrical load of the device connected to it. You can find the amperage of any device by looking on the nameplate attached to it.

Besides the electrical load connected to the cord, the length of the cord also plays a factor. Longer cords need to be a larger wire size to power the same device as a shorter cord.

For example, an air compressor may run great on a 12-gauge cord that's 50 feet long. That same compressor might be damaged on a 12-gauge cord that's 100 feet long. In that case, you'd need to upsize to a 10-gauge cord.

Q: What do all those letters on extension cords mean?

A: The National Electric Code specifies characteristics for extension cords that are required to be printed approximately every foot along the wire:

| CODE | MEANING |
|------------|---------------------------------|
| S | Flexible general use cord |
| W | Rated for outdoors |
| J | Standard 300-volt insulation |
| O | Oil resistant |
| FT2 | Flame retardant cord |
| AWG | Wire size, proceeded by numeral |

Q: Is there a difference in indoor and outdoor extension cords?

A: Yes. Indoor cords have thinner protective insulation and should not be used for outdoor projects.

Q: What are some other safety tips for extension cords?

A: Don't run cords under rugs or furniture. Don't run cords through doors or anywhere they could be damaged. Check cords for damage before using. Don't remove the third prong from a three-prong plug. Use a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) in damp areas.

The letters – **SJTOW** – reveal that this extension cord is a general use flexible cord covered in insulation that's good up to 300 volts. It also has a vinyl jacket, is oil-resistant and rated for outdoor use.

Small, light-duty indoor extension cords, like this one, are not appropriate for outdoor use or large appliances.

The **third prong** on extension cords is a safety feature and could save your life! Do not remove it.

PRO TIP: USE A BRIGHTLY COLORED CORD IN HIGH TRAFFIC AREAS TO HELP AVOID TRIPS AND FALLS.

APRIL 2025 | Walton EMC

realite



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High Voltage HEROES:

MEET THE LINEMEN THAT KEEP WALTON EMC POWERED

Linemen work in some of the most challenging conditions imaginable—battling extreme weather, working at dangerous heights and handling high-voltage equipment—all to ensure the power keeps flowing to our homes, businesses and communities.

For National Linemen Appreciation Day, we celebrate the people at Walton EMC who keep our local grid functioning and our modern way of life possible. We spoke with linemen with experience ranging from fresh recruits to decades-long veterans, to hear their stories, challenges and what makes this demanding profession so rewarding.

In their own words, here's what it means to be on the front lines of an electric cooperative:



25 YEARS

DAVE ABBOTT / One of my best memories at Walton is when we delivered Christmas gifts to kids in the hospital. A dad of a 3-year-old boy came out of the room crying, hugging us, and telling us that their family would be in the hospital through Christmas, and what we gave was probably the only Christmas his son would get.



7 YEARS

CALEB TALLANT / I have a servant's heart from being born into a family of servant-minded people. My dad is a cop, and my brother served in the army. Being a Walton EMC lineman is my way of serving.



3 YEARS

BRYCE WATSON / The most rewarding part of my job is working in my hometown where I grew up. When I'm working, I'm helping my neighbors and the community I know.



10 YEARS

BLAINE OGLE / There is a specific man who can work 18 hours straight when it's 105 degrees or 8 degrees. We are called to be the hands and feet of the Lord. Being a lineman allows me to be a servant on a career scale.



18 YEARS

ADAM SIMMONS / I've always been interested in the history of Walton EMC's system. When we repair a broken pole, I'm always looking at the hook marks in the wood and wondering who the guys were that put that pole in the ground the first time. Or when we are walking in the woods to check for limbs on the line, I think about who walked that same path before me. It's like we're connected to the generations of linemen before us.



24 YEARS

JASON BLANKENSHIP / The memory that stands out in my mind is working in Mississippi during Hurricane Katrina. I came into that situation thinking about the overtime I was going to get paid, and I left thinking about the suffering. That is when I realized this job was bigger than money.

Check our Facebook page throughout April for more stories from Walton EMC linemen.

SAVE
THE
DATE

- 89th Walton EMC Annual Meeting
- **Saturday, June 21 • 8–11 a.m.**
- Walton EMC Headquarters, Monroe



GET THE REALITE ONLINE

Step 1 Point your phone camera at the QR code.

Step 2 Tap the screen to access Walton EMC news online.

quick guide

IF YOUR POWER IS OUT

770.267.2505

[waltonemc.com](https://www.waltonemc.com) > Report an Outage

WHEN WE'RE AVAILABLE

Power Outages and Emergencies > 24/7

Contact Center > M–F, 7A–7P

Business Offices > M–F, 8A–5P

find us

Monroe 842 US Hwy. 78

Snellville 3645 Lenora Church Rd.

Watkinsville 2061-D Hog Mountain Rd.

Web [waltonemc.com](https://www.waltonemc.com)

Facebook [facebook.com/waltonemc](https://www.facebook.com/waltonemc)

Youtube [youtube.com/emctv](https://www.youtube.com/emctv)

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©2025 Walton EMC is a customer-owned power company. That means our cooperative focuses on service, not profit. We serve more than 135,000 accounts in Athens-Clarke, Barrow, DeKalb, Greene, Gwinnett, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Rockdale and Walton Counties.

Our subsidiaries supply natural gas and security services.

Washington bound

Four area high school students will join hundreds of their peers from around the nation for the 2025 Washington Youth Tour. Walton EMC is sponsoring the all-expense-paid leadership experience occurring in June.

While in the nation’s capital, students will meet policymakers, visit historic monuments and participate in citizenship and leadership development activities. Youth delegates will also spend time in Atlanta, meeting state leaders and seeing Georgia landmarks.

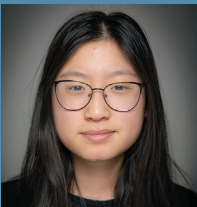
The goal of Youth Tour is to inspire teens to become engaged citizens.

“Preparing the next generation of leaders is crucial to ensuring our community, state and nation will be in good hands,” said Walton EMC CEO Ron Marshall. “The tour is a way to kindle the spark of leadership by showing teens they belong among those willing to step up in service to others.”

Representing Walton EMC at the 2025 Washington Youth Tour are:



Bruin Johnston
North Oconee HS



Rachel Li
North Oconee HS



Chloe Toole
Oconee HS



Haley Parsons
North Oconee HS

EmPOWERing EDUCATION

In what’s become an annual ritual, teams of Walton EMC employees recently traveled to area schools to surprise teachers with School EmPOWERment education grants. The co-op distributed \$366,164 to provide teachers with the tools they need to make creative and innovative lesson plans a reality for students.

The check presentations were met with broad smiles and sometimes squeals of delight from students at the 55 public and private schools receiving grants. Students in kindergarten through 12th grade will benefit from the grants.

This year’s funded projects will stimulate classroom learning in subjects such as engineering, robotics, creative writing, exercise, podcasting, entrepreneurship, gardening and construction. Grants are also helping teachers purchase 3D printers, musical instruments, laboratory equipment, books and art supplies.

At Carver Middle School in Monroe, a \$10,000 grant is providing financial assistance to construct a barn to house livestock projects for agriculture students.

“This generous grant will allow us to provide even more hands-on learning opportunities, expand our resources, and continue inspiring the next generation of agricultural leaders,” the school’s FFA organization posted on Facebook.

Since the School EmPOWERment Grant program began nine years ago, more than \$3 million has gone to school systems across Walton EMC’s 10 counties. The money comes from unclaimed co-op refunds and is authorized by Georgia law. No grant money comes from members’ power bills.

Investing in education and the students who represent the future of communities throughout the co-op’s service area is among the ways Walton EMC demonstrates its commitment to the community, said CEO Ron Marshall.

“Our co-op is focused on providing reliable, affordable electricity and serving our local community,” he said. “One of the highlights of our year is helping to make classroom dreams come true for deserving educators.”



Visit [flickr.com/waltonemc/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/waltonemc/) or scan the code to view/download School EmPOWERment Grant photos from local schools.



NG3 connects with teens

A faith-based organization that aims to make positive change in the lives of teens is among the latest recipients of an Operation Round Up (ORU) grant from the customer-owners of Walton EMC.

Nonprofit NG3 – short for Next Generation Character, Community and Change – currently serves about 1,200 students in 10 area public and private high schools. Programming centers on athletic teams, with some additional participants coming from marching band, cheerleading, video gaming and theater student groups.

The organization provides character development programs and literature tailored to meet the needs of individual student groups. It also encourages volunteerism, benefitting local organizations such as Gwinnett County Special Olympics and church food pantries.

To further build relationships with students, NG3 adult volunteers host small group meetings focused on Christian discipleship and connection, says Taylor Ricks, NG3’s Monroe area school director.

“We believe students don’t need more programs; they need more people,” the Walton EMC customer-owner said. “We strive to show up consistently, meeting the students where they are to build intentional relationships.”

A \$9,000 ORU grant will help fund NG3 scholarships for high school seniors and provide meals for the small group meetings.

 **LEARN MORE AT ng3.org**



Walton EMC customer-owner Taylor Ricks presents a 2024 NG3 Character Scholarship to Monroe Area High School senior KJ Smith, a girls’ softball team member and NG3 student leadership project participant. An Operation Round Up grant will help fund NG3 scholarships for graduating seniors this year.