

**MID-CAROLINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.**  
**SERVICE RULES AND REGULATIONS**

**500 MISCELLANEOUS**

**501 CLAIMS AGAINST THE COOPERATIVE**

In the event the Cooperative's negligence results in personal loss or an individual feels the Cooperative is responsible for such personal loss, a claim against the Cooperative for the incident should be filed by the injured party. A description of the event will be compiled and processed by the Cooperative.

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**502 COMPLAINTS**

Complaints concerning the charges, practices, facilities, personnel, or services of the Cooperative shall be investigated promptly. A record shall be maintained of all such complaints received showing the name and address of the complainant, the date and character of the complaint, and the account number. Immediate action shall be taken with results being recorded in the member's file.

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**503 EASEMENTS**

The Cooperative may request grants of easement or right-of-way over, on, and/or under such lands owned by other parties. Such easement shall be in accordance with reasonable terms and conditions that the Cooperative may require for the furnishing of electrical service to him or other members or for the construction, operation, maintenance, or relocation of the Cooperative's electrical facilities.

Refer to Appendix section for easement copies.

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**504 RIGHT OF ACCESS**

Properly identified employees or contractors of the Cooperative shall have right of access to members' premises during reasonable hours or at such appropriate times for the purpose of reading meters, testing, inspecting, repairing, removing, and maintaining equipment and/or facilities, which are the property of the Cooperative.

All employees have in their possession pictured identification to verify employment with the Cooperative and in addition, they should have appropriate work orders for gaining access to the members' premises.

# MID-CAROLINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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### 505 VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

#### **Right-of-Way Clearing for New Lines**

We clear trees and vegetation from new rights-of-way prior to performing line construction. Our contract crews meet Mid-Carolina's right-of-way specifications, which comply with the National Electric Safety Code. Wood belongs to the property owner and is left on-site at the edge of the right-of-way. Limbs are ground up on-site. Mid-Carolina does not remove wood from the property.

#### **Right-of-Way Re-clearing Maintenance**

Our contract crews re-clear Mid-Carolina rights-of-way on a continuing basis. We use mechanical trimming methods to re-establish proper clearances and herbicides to help prevent undergrowth and extend the period between re-clearing cycles. All herbicides used by Mid-Carolina are approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Herbicides are selectively applied to target woody species and are grass friendly. These methods help us reduce outages, especially during storms or inclement weather. Mid-Carolina does not remove wood from the property.

#### **Clearance Specifications**

In all situations, trees near primary lines should be trimmed before they actually touch the power lines. Enough clearance must be obtained so the trees do not cause outages and clearance is maintained until the next re-clearing cycle.

Line Clearances - Clearance for three-phase, two-phase, single-phase primary lines and open-wire secondaries (uninsulated wires) is a minimum of 10 feet from the wire on each side, with additional footage often required. The 10-foot horizontal minimum clearance will be maintained from "ground to sky" on all three-phase lines. Maintaining clearance on primary lines helps reduce tree-related outages during inclement weather and storms. The preferred minimum clearance is 3 feet on each side of all service drops and secondary wires (insulated wires). Effort will be made to eliminate all trees, tree parts and growth points beneath the wires and all weak, diseased and dead limbs above the wires which may cause outages.

Transformer Clearances - The green box in your yard contains an underground service transformer. Never enclose it or block it with fencing, shrubs or anything that prohibits immediate access. Maintain these clearance minimums around your transformer: 4 feet on the back, 4 feet on each side, and 10 feet on the front. (The front has the door and lock.)

If these clearances aren't maintained, Mid-Carolina may need to remove obstructions. Please do not replace them as they cause timely delays in outage restoration.

### **Dead and Danger Trees**

Trees that are alive but severely leaning or otherwise pose a threat to Mid-Carolina facilities or equipment are classified as *danger trees*. Trees that are dead or in the process of dying are classified as *dead trees*. In an effort to ensure reliable service for all members, Mid-Carolina cuts dead and danger trees outside of any easement that pose a threat to our power lines. In areas maintained by the property owner, such as yards, we will cut down the dead and danger trees and leave the wood on-site. Limbs will be chipped and hauled away. In unmaintained and/or wooded areas, dead and danger trees will be cut down and left as is on-site. Mid-Carolina will not clean up, remove or haul away any dead and danger tree debris.

### **Notification**

Mid-Carolina uses its phone notification system to contact each member on the circuit prior to re-clearing. The notification will be sent to the primary contact phone number associated with the account. Notifications are sent when a contractor begins work on a particular circuit, which could mean the notification could be received months prior to the work being done on a member's property. Notification is not possible when tree crews are working on outages, emergencies, or the cutting of dead and danger trees.

### **Vegetation Management Requests**

Members can make specific requests for vegetation management by contacting Mid-Carolina at (803) 749-6400 or (888) 813-8000. We evaluate each request on a case-by-case basis. Mid-Carolina reserves the right to refuse any request that, in our judgment, poses little or no threat to our lines. Mid-Carolina does not remove any wood

### **Debris Disposal**

Branches and brush debris from re-clearing activities in maintained areas, such as yards and lawns, will be chipped. Large limbs and wood will be cut and left on-site. Material from our chipping operation is available to our members at no charge. If you would like to have chips for mulch or compost, it's best to ask the vegetation clearing crews when they are working in your area. You can also obtain chips by calling Mid-Carolina at (803) 749-6400 or (888) 813-8000 or emailing [memberservices@mcecoop.com](mailto:memberservices@mcecoop.com). We deliver the chips by truckload in "as is" condition to the closest areas where the crews are working. Small amounts are not delivered.

If crews are working in an area where no requests for chips have been made, chipped material may be spread in our easement and mowed as a means of disposal.

Branches and brush debris that are trimmed and left in unmaintained areas will be mowed and left on-site. Branches, wood and brush debris generated as a result of storms and storm restoration will not be cleaned up by Mid-Carolina or its contract crews.

Storm Debris – Mid-Carolina and its contractors will cut fallen trees and other storm debris to clear our lines. We will only cut what is needed to restore service and storm debris will not be cleaned up or removed from the property.

## 505 VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

### **Service Wires and Outdoor Lights**

Mid-Carolina's contract crews trim limbs to maintain adequate clearance around the service wire to your meter and the service wire to Mid-Carolina's leased outdoor lighting. Trimming limbs for outdoor lights to improve light output is the responsibility of the member. Service wires will only be cleared of small branches not large limbs or trees over the service wires.

**If you, or a private tree company hired by you, feel it is unsafe to work close to the service wire or to cut or remove trees next to it, please contact Mid-Carolina at (803) 749-6400 or (888) 813-8000 or email [memberservices@mcecoop.com](mailto:memberservices@mcecoop.com) to schedule a crew to disconnect your electric service and re-install it after the tree work is complete. There could possibly be charges for this service. It will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.**

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**506 CAPITAL CREDITS**

Retirement of capital credits will be made whenever the Board of Trustees approves such retirements under the standards set forth in the Cooperative's Bylaws. Such retirements will be consistent with good management practices and with the provisions of all debt covenants. Current and former members shall be treated the same for the credits being retired.

Capital credits may be paid to the estate of a deceased patron upon proper application and proof by the personal representative of the member's estate. These retirements will be discounted using the discount rate published in the Cooperative's most recent audited financial statements. The amount to be discounted and paid will be based on all the Capital Credits assigned to the member or patron as of the latest year assigned on the Cooperative's books at the time of retirement/payment. Any Capital Credits later assigned to a deceased member or patron will be recorded as retired capital.

If a member or a member's estate does not claim capital credits by cashing the retirement check within 180 days of the check date, the Cooperative will maintain the capital credits on its books and make an attempt to find the Payee. The Cooperative will charge a per month fee beginning 180 days after the issuance of the retirement check to maintain the retired capital credit account and for its services in attempting to locate the Payee. The amount of fee for account maintenance and attempting to locate the member will be shown in the appendix of Provided Services and Charges attached and incorporated in these Service Rules and Regulations, as updated from time to time by the Board of Trustees of the Cooperative.

The right to receive capital credit payments is dependent upon the member's compliance with member obligations, including the payment of all service and other charges due from the member to the Cooperative. In the event that the member is delinquent or in default in payment of charges due to the Cooperative, or the member has otherwise breached or failed to comply with the Cooperative's member obligations, the Cooperative will withhold payment of capital credit payments to the member until such time as the member has cured the payment default or the breach of member obligations.

In the event a member owes a delinquent account indebtedness or other debt obligation to the Cooperative, the Cooperative will apply any capital credit payments that would be due to the member as payment (full or partial payment, as may result from the payment) of the account indebtedness or other debt obligation, as a recoupment based upon member rights and obligations. This right of recoupment shall exist without regard to the age of the unpaid indebtedness and without regard to any bankruptcy discharge of the member, as a requirement of member rights with regard to capital credit payments to members.



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**507 OTHER LIGHTING SYSTEMS**

Other lighting systems will be installed on request at the Cooperative's option. Monthly charges will be based on the following formula:

1.7% of the actual installed cost of the lighting system plus energy cost including the Cooperative's Monthly Adjustment Factor.

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**508 DAMAGED EQUIPMENT**

Persons responsible for damage or destruction of Cooperative equipment may be charged for the repair or replacement thereof including any expenses associated with finding and correcting the damage. With regard to meters, the member shall be responsible for any damage to the meter at his premises unless he produces reliable and convincing evidence that such meter was damaged by:

- 1) An accident; or
- 2) The unauthorized act of another person not residing at the premises.

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**509 SAFETY STATEMENT**

The Cooperative shall exercise reasonable care to reduce the hazards to which its employees, its members and the general public may be subjected. Upon request, the Cooperative will give its members such information and assistance as is reasonable to ensure safe and efficient service.

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### 510 ACTIONS WHEN THEFT OF ELECTRICITY IS SUSPECTED

#### I. OBJECTIVE

This procedure establishes the steps to be followed when an employee suspects that electricity is being stolen from the Cooperative.

#### II. PROCEDURE CONTENT

- A. Whenever an employee suspects from the inspection of a premises, metering installation or otherwise that electricity is being stolen from the Cooperative, the employee should document the facts that lead to the suspicion, photograph any meters, wires, or other evidence which supports the suspicion, then report the suspicion to the employee's immediate supervisor.
- B. The employee should not confront the person believed to be stealing the electricity or tampering with the meter or take corrective action without first consulting with the employee's supervisor.
- C. If the supervisor agrees that theft is probable, the supervisor should report the suspected theft to a member of staff and the supervisor and employee should contact law enforcement with responsibility for the area where the suspected theft is occurring, give a full law enforcement report, and cooperate with the law enforcement or prosecuting authorities in any following investigation. The decision to bring criminal charges shall belong solely to the police or prosecuting authorities, the Cooperative shall not take action, or swear out a warrant, separate and apart from law enforcement or prosecuting authorities without specific written approval from a member of staff and General Counsel.

#### III. SOURCES

The basis for this policy is:

- A. S.C. Code Ann. § 16-1-100 (finding theft of electric current to be a Class A misdemeanor);
- B. S.C. Code Ann. § 16-13-385 (making it a crime to alter, tamper or bypass an electric meter);
- C. S.C. Code Ann. § 16-13-380 (making it a crime to steal electric current); and *Eaves v. Broad River Elec. Co-op., Inc.*, 277 S.C. 475, 289 S.E.2d 414 (1982).

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