

Surge Protection In 2011

Don't leave electronics and appliances at risk

Are your appliances and electronic equipment adequately protected against power surges?

According to the Electronics Industry Association, electricity surges cause millions of dollars of damage to electronic gear each year.

As a NWCPUD customer, it is your responsibility to purchase surge suppressors that are adequate to protect your sensitive electronic equipment.

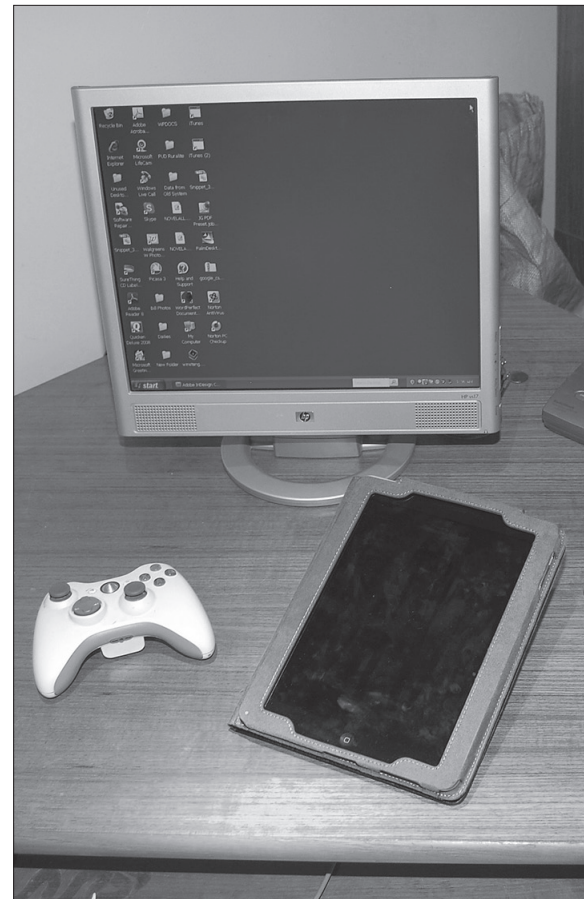
Power fluctuations occur more often than you think. Whenever any appliance—such as a furnace, electric heater, refrigerator, freezer, washer or dryer comes on during its operation, it can cause a slight variation in the power current and impact your computer, stereo, big screen TV or microwave.

Before Lightning Strikes

Lightning storms can play havoc with sensitive electronic equipment. High-quality surge protectors can help protect equipment from power surges when distant lightning strikes hit the electrical grid, but nearby lightning is so powerful it can jump through surge suppressors.

Lightning can enter homes and buildings in three ways: a direct strike, through wires or pipes that extend outside, and through the ground. Once in a building, it can travel through electrical, phone, plumbing and radio/television reception systems, and through metal wires or bars in concrete walls or flooring.

It is your responsibility to protect all of your appliances and electronics. One safeguard is to unplug electronics and disconnect Internet, antenna and satellite-dish connections before a thunderstorm threatens. This includes not only the electrical system, but the reception system. Do not unplug equipment during a storm.



Power fluctuations even enter equipment that you may think is turned off and safe.

While you may be most familiar with power surges from electrical disturbances, phone lines connected to modems in home computers, dish satellite receivers and TV cable connections can also pose a threat.

Your best bet in protecting your computer, stereo, big screen TV, DVD and other sensitive electronic equipment is to purchase a high-quality surge suppressor. Purchase a surge suppressor that is rated to protect the equipment that will be plugged into it.

Stay away from off-the-shelf power strips which can slow down a spike and cause serious damage to your equipment.

The least expensive suppressors are usually made for small appliances.



Power spikes can damage valuable electronics and appliances. Fight the spike by plugging sensitive equipment into surge protectors.

Times are expressed in nanoseconds (one billionth of a second). Most surge protectors have a rating of 50 picoseconds, clamping a power spike within five nanoseconds.

Maximum surge current (Maximum transient current or peak surge current).

Look for a rating of 10,000 amps or higher. Less than that and your equipment may not be adequately protected.

- **Three protected lines.**

Be sure your unit has a hot to neutral, hot to ground and neutral to ground line.

- **A warranty.**

Compare warranties for the length of time they cover and their money-back guarantee on equipment that is plugged into the surge suppressor and is damaged by a surge in voltage.

Many manufacturers offer lifetime warranties and generous insurance policies. "Connected insurance" ranges from \$10,000 to \$50,000 or more.

A quality surge suppressor for a computer, printer, fax machine or TV, will also have fuse protection, a LED light that indicates the device is working and a plug in for phone line or cable connection protection.

To protect your computer, use a suppressor that filters electromagnetic interference/radio frequency interference (EMI/RFI). This "noise" in a power line can destroy a computer hard drive and wipe out data.

Surge protectors accommodate from four to eight AC outlets per strip.

Remember that even a high quality surge protector cannot protect your equipment from power blackouts or brownouts and offers limited protection from lightning strikes. ■

See sidebar for how to protect sensitive equipment before lightning strikes.

A mid-range unit would be appropriate for audio and video equipment while a more expensive surge suppressor is for a computer or a printer.

Here's what to look for when purchasing a surge protection device:

- **A UL label with UL Standard 1449.**

This rating requires the suppressor to clamp the surge at 330 volts or less.

- **A low voltage clamping level.**

This level is when the surge suppressor starts to work. The lower the clamping level, the better the protection.

- **Energy rating (in joules).**

A rating of 700 or better is recommended. Because energy ratings are not standardized, do not make your selection on this rating alone.

- **A quick response time.**

Clamping response time is the amount of time it takes the suppressor to respond to a surge.

NORTHERN WASCO COUNTY PUD

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

January 4, 11, 18, 25

Your Business in a Digital Age.

Free one-hour discussion of new tools and methods to promote one's business online. Each session is independent. Attend one session or several. Meetings begin at 12:10 at the Mid-Columbia Economic Development Offices, 515 E. 2nd St. Seating is limited. **For more information or to register, contact Doris Schmidt at frontdeskdesign.com or 541-980-3482.**

January 7, 14, 21, 28

Dance night.

Line and partner dance lessons at 7 p.m. every Friday followed by open dancing until 10 p.m. Singles and couples of all ages are invited to enjoy family-friendly entertainment at the Cherry Park Grange, 1002 Lambert St.

For details, call 993-3540.

January 25

Northern Wasco County PUD Board Meeting.

6 p.m., 2345 River Road, The Dalles. Members of the public are welcome.

January 28

St. Mary's Academy Family Auction & Carnival.

Annual fundraiser with games, food, live music and silent auction from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Admission is free.

For more information, call 296-6004.

Nonprofit community organizations are encouraged to list events and activities that support, nurture and enhance the quality of life in communities served by NWCPUD. To list an item in the community calendar, please call 541-298-3302.