Reclosers protect lines and consumers from short circuits and allow temporary faults to clear, which helps keep service energized to the customers without needless interruptions.
Photo courtesy of NRECA

Why Do My Lights Blink?

This is a frequent question heard at KPUD. Usually, blinking lights are the result of momentary outages that occur when some type of disturbance exists on the line. It could be a lightning strike, an automobile striking a power pole, or an animal or tree branch coming in contact with an energized power line.

Because today's microprocessors are so intolerant, brief outages are more noticeable than they were in the past. Actually, when lights blink, it can indicate our equipment is operating properly. Blinking lights reflect the operation of equipment that protects the lines and keeps the power from going off for more than just a moment.

Klickitat PUD's distribution system includes devices called reclosers, which operate much like a switch or a self-resetting circuit breaker. Whenever there is a short circuit on the line, the re-closer interrupts the flow of electricity. If the short circuit is temporary, which is often the case, the recloser permits power to continue flowing through the line with only a brief interruption of service—meaning your lights blink.

Without this device, every short circuit—temporary or otherwise—would cause the power to be off until Klickitat PUD could send a lineman to restore service. Usually, reclosers will operate automatically three times before stopping the flow of electricity and causing a power outage. The recloser operation protects the lines from damage.

A word of caution: If you have lights blinking continually, it may indicate a problem, and you should contact our office. While we strive to deliver steady, consistent and high-quality power, sometimes circumstances beyond our control cause power disturbances. To protect your valuable appliances and sensitive electronic equipment, we recommend protective power quality devices.

An estimated 80 percent of power quality problems originate inside the home. Culprits include motors starting up or shutting down, improper electrical wiring and grounding, and overloaded circuits.

If you experience continuous blinks or improper power quality, please check the electrical equipment and wiring in your house first. Then give us a call. We are happy to help you. ■

KPUD Plants Continue Award-Winning Ways

The Washington State Department of Ecology recently recognized the Klickitat, Dallesport, Lyle and Wishram wastewater treatment plants as recipients for the 2013 wastewater treatment plant outstanding performance awards.

Each plant was evaluated for compliance with its effluent limits, monitoring and reporting requirements; spill prevention planning; pretreatment; and other regulatory activities to stay in full compliance with their discharge permits. These important obligations must be met to protect Washington's water quality.

Out of about 300 wastewater plants in the state, Klickitat PUD's systems are four of the 125 to achieve full compliance with their National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit. This is the sixth consecutive year of achievement for Klickitat, eighth consecutive year for Lyle, and fifth consecutive year for Wishram.

"It takes diligent operators and a strong management team, working effectively together, to achieve this high level of compliance," wrote Water Quality Program Manager Heather Bartlett. "Ecology appreciates the extraordinary level of effort your plant operators demonstrated throughout 2013. Talented and proficient operators are critical to successful plant operations and protecting the health of Washington's waters."

The communities of Klickitat, Dallesport, Lyle and Wishram, and the dedicated KPUD operators, are congratulated for their efforts, having worked hard to maintain compliance 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.