



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Ameren Illinois Reminding Customers to Keep Mylar Balloons Away From Power Lines**

*Metallic party balloons conduct electricity and may cause outages*

**COLLINSVILLE, IL** – May means graduation season is upon us. As people gather for outdoor celebrations, Ameren Illinois is asking customers to properly dispose of Mylar balloons in an effort to reduce the potential for power outages.

Mylar balloons are metallic and conduct electricity, resulting in surges and shorts that have the ability to knock out power, start fires and cause significant damage to the electric grid. Each year, Ameren Illinois responds to numerous power outages caused by Mylar balloons contacting electrical equipment. The popular party accessories also pose an unnecessary safety hazard for linemen who must safely untangle and remove what's left of the balloons from energized high voltage lines.

"We realize this is the time of year when everyone is outside celebrating new graduates, newlyweds, birthdays and spring holidays," said George Justice, Vice President of Electric Operations for Ameren Illinois. "Keeping the balloons tethered and weighted while in use and then properly puncturing and disposing after the fact can help to ensure they do not get loose and end up in our power lines and substations."

If you happen to notice a balloon or another toy entangled in electric infrastructure, always assume the line is live and do not attempt to remove the object yourself. Instead call Ameren Illinois at 1-800-755-5000 and a crew will be dispatched to handle the situation.

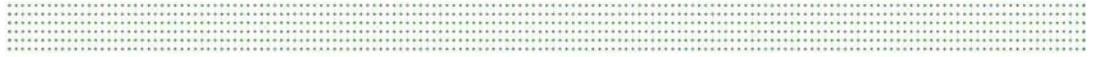
"Mylar balloon-related outages are more common than one might imagine," Justice added. "A little extra precaution can truly help us keep the lights on."

Ameren Illinois offers additional Mylar balloon safety tips:

- Do not intentionally release the balloons.
- It is safest to keep metallic balloons inside. In fact, some parks have banned metallic balloons on their property, so be aware of these warnings.
- Never tie a metallic ribbon on your balloon. Also, never tie a metallic balloon to a child's arm. These both can pose substantial electrical threats.

### **About Ameren Illinois**

Ameren Illinois delivers energy to 1.2 million electric and 816,000 natural gas customers in central and southern Illinois. Our service territory covers more than 1,200 communities and 43,700 square miles. Our mission is to power the quality of life. For more information, visit [AmerenIllinois.com](http://AmerenIllinois.com), find us on Twitter @AmerenIllinois or Facebook.com/Ameren Illinois.



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