



Winter Safety and Heating Tips

Help Avoid Hypothermia

Cold weather can put us at risk of hypothermia, a dangerous condition caused by a lowering of body temperature. Symptoms include feeling very cold, tired and weak; shivering and confusion. To help avoid hypothermia:

- **Wear a hat** indoors, outdoors and even in bed. Half of our body heat is lost through the head and neck.
- **Dress and sleep in layers** to help insulate you. If you lower the thermostat at night, add layers of blankets, quilts, etc. to keep warm.
- **Eat and drink right.** Food is fuel for the body. Nutritious meals help keep your “body furnace” going. Avoid alcohol, as it speeds up the loss of body heat.
- **Know your medications** as some can increase your risk of hypothermia. Talk to your health care provider.

Consider Heating Safety

Have your heating system and chimney, flues and vents checked once a year by a professional and purchase a carbon monoxide (CO) detector for your home. (CO detectors are now required by state law in most residences.)

When using supplemental heat sources such as space heaters and fireplaces, always follow the manufacturer's instructions. For wood fireplaces, visit the U.S. Fire Administration's website at usfa.fema.gov.

Always ensure you are heating your home efficiently; compare your energy cost for the appliance or fireplace versus the cost to use your furnace or boiler.

Have a plan in place in case you lose your home heating source. Stay elsewhere until your heat is restored or use a supplemental heating source. **Never use a stove, oven or candles as heat sources.**

If you use a generator:

- Operate your generator outdoors in a clean, dry, well-ventilated area and never indoors or in a garage.
- Make sure all electrical connections comply with the National Electric Code.
- Never connect a generator to an existing wiring system without an automatic transfer switch.
- Never overload your generator with too many appliances.
- Never let children play near a generator.
- Read our *Emergency Generator Safety* brochure at rge.com, click on “Usage and Safety,” “Electrical Safety” and then on “Generator Safety.”



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Removing Snow and Ice Safely

When you remove snow and ice from driveways and sidewalks, make sure you know where our meters are so you don't damage them, inadvertently disrupt service to your home or business or put yourself in danger. Snow and ice can damage electricity and natural gas meters, natural gas pipes and natural gas regulators, so never bury them when you are shoveling, using a snowblower or plowing. When removing snow or ice from a roof, never let it fall on our meters or other equipment.

Natural gas appliance chimneys and vents should also be kept free of snow and ice to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

Be prepared if you smell natural gas. If you smell that distinctive odor – it's like the smell of rotten eggs – **get up, get out and call RG&E immediately from a neighbor's phone.** We'll respond quickly to make sure you and your family are safe.

If you are a RG&E natural gas customer and need to report a natural gas emergency or suspect a carbon monoxide problem, call us immediately at 1.800.743.1702.

How We Restore Service Following Storms

A proven process ensures that we safely restore service as quickly and efficiently as possible

When storms strike, we're ready. Our trained and skilled crews, on 24-hour standby, respond quickly to any electrical emergency. We have plans and priorities for restoring electricity service safely and efficiently. Safety for our crews, our customers, and the community is paramount when it comes to restoring power.

Our first priority is responding to known incidents of downed power lines to make the situations safe. Once this vital public safety work is complete, we will:

- Assess the damage to the electricity delivery system.
- Develop a detailed restoration plan.
- Make repairs as quickly as possible.

How we restore power following major storms

We first repair the backbone of the electricity system – transmission lines and substations – that bring electricity to the local distribution system that serves our customers. We then make any necessary repairs to the distribution system that includes the poles and power lines along streets and roads, focusing first on those circuits where we can restore power to the largest number of customers. As part of this process, we take into account the needs of hospitals, nursing homes, fire and police stations, as well as any other critical infrastructure. We also focus on our customers who depend on electrically-operated life support equipment. This is a time-proven process that ensures we safely restore service as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Report outages, get updates and be safe

- If your electricity service is interrupted, report it and get restoration updates online by viewing our outage map or our outage list. Visit rge.com, and click on the "Outage Central" tab. You can also call RG&E at **1.800.743.1701**.
- **Stay away from downed power lines** – even lines that appear "dead" can be deadly.
- **Stay out of flooded basements** because energized wiring or outlets below the water line may pose a hazard. Natural gas service in a flooded basement may also pose a danger. If a basement or home is in danger of flooding, customers should contact their utilities to turn off electricity and/or natural gas service.

Move Over for RG&E Utility Vehicles, Too

The New York State Ambrose Searles "Move Over" Act means drivers must move over for not only emergency vehicles but those with flashing amber lights, like the ones on RG&E vehicles. The act, named after two New York State Troopers who were killed by passing motorists, requires drivers to reduce speed and move over when approaching vehicles displaying red and/or white emergency lights or flashing amber lights. Failure to slow down and move over can result in points on your license and fines.

Season's Greetings

Wishing you and your family
a safe and happy holiday season.

