

It Will Pay to Prepare Now for the Heating Season

As we encourage you to make plans now for winter heating, please keep in mind:

- For most customers, the major component of bills – electricity and natural gas supply costs – are unregulated, market-based prices that fluctuate. (Some customers choose to pay RG&E or a supplier other than RG&E a fixed price for energy supply.)
- Electricity and natural gas supply costs together with the severity of the winter will be the biggest factors in determining your bills.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO MANAGE ENERGY BILLS >>

- **To get started on using energy wisely, conduct a home energy audit.** For information on professional and do-it-yourself energy audits, visit eere.energy.gov/consumer.
- **For low-cost and no-cost energy-saving tips,** visit rge.com. The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority's getenergysmart.org Web site also offers valuable energy conservation information.
- **When shopping for new appliances,** look for the ENERGY STAR® designation that indicates the most energy efficient models. Also look for yellow EnergyGuide labels that provide energy use and operating cost information for specific models.
- **Take advantage of rebates for installing high-efficiency natural gas equipment.** Funded through the state-mandated System Benefits Charge that appears on customer bills, RG&E is offering residential natural gas customers rebates for installing qualifying natural gas equipment and related control equipment **on or after July 1, 2009**. Rebate applications are available from contractors, at rge.com or by visiting one of our customer service offices. For more information about customer and equipment eligibility, terms and conditions of the program, and answers to frequently asked questions, visit rge.com.
- **Install** energy-saving automatic set-back thermostats.
- **Replace incandescent light bulbs** with compact fluorescent bulbs that use up to 75% less energy and last up to 10 times as long.
- **Take the worry out of bill payment.** Budget Billing spreads your utility costs evenly over 12 months. It's a great tool for planning your monthly budget because you'll know what your RG&E bill is going to be in advance. For more information or to enroll for Budget Billing, visit rge.com or call us at **1.800.743.2110**.

For added peace of mind, consider electronic funds transfer (EFT). With EFT, RG&E will deduct your payment from your checking account automatically. No worries. No envelope. No stamp. We'll still send you a paper bill. To enroll, complete the form on the back of your payment stub or visit rge.com and click on "Your Account," "Pay Your Bill" and then on "Payment Options."

- >> **If you are having trouble paying your RG&E bills,** contact us right away at **1.877.266.3492**. The sooner you do, the sooner we can work on a solution together.



For more energy-wise tips, visit rge.com.

energy-wise tips

Generator Safety

Emergency generators are a popular way to supply stand-by electricity. When properly sized, installed and operated, stand-by generators (or emergency or back-up generators) can safely power electrical equipment during power interruptions. However, you must follow proper procedures or you may place yourself and your family at serious risk. Also, improperly operated generators can feed electricity back into our lines, putting our people who are working to restore service in danger.

Portable generators are smaller, stand alone and are not connected to any existing wiring system. Extension cords are used to connect portable generators to electrical equipment or appliances. Review these safety tips before using your portable or stationary generator.

- Read, understand and follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Operate outdoors in a clean, dry area.
- Your generator must be properly grounded.
- After losing power, turn off main breaker or pull main fuse block.
- Generators that are directly connected to existing wiring systems must use a double-pole, double-throw transfer switch.
- Electrical connections must comply with the National Electric Code (NEC).
- Do not overload your generator with too many appliances.
- Use properly sized extension cords in good condition.



Typical portable generator

Stationary generators require additional consideration. They should be installed only by professionals. NEC and local code requirements must be met, and a double-pole, double-throw switch is a must. If you are planning to install a stationary emergency generator powered by natural gas:

- Contact RG&E at **1.800.743.2110** to ensure that there is adequate natural gas pressure.
- Check (or be sure your contractor checks) with the municipality to see if a permit is required.
- Be sure to read, understand and follow all manufacturer's instructions for safe operation.



Typical stationary natural-gas fired generator

A Special Note About Natural Gas-Fired Generators >> Many generators fueled by natural gas require a delivery pressure that's greater than RG&E's standard pressure. If the generator is not supplied with the manufacturer's suggested delivery pressure, it may not run. *Before purchasing a natural gas-fired generator, contact RG&E at **1.800.743.2110** to ensure an elevated delivery pressure is available to your home or business.* This is **NOT** available in all areas.



Read our *Emergency Generator Safety* brochure at rge.com (click on "Safety Information") or call us at **1.585.771.2163**.





Using Your Senses

A natural gas leak is usually recognized by smell, sight or sound.

SMELL >> Natural gas is colorless and odorless. For your safety, a distinctive odor, similar to rotten eggs, is added. Note: Not all transmission lines are odorized.

SIGHT >> You may see a white cloud, mist, fog, bubbles in standing water or blowing dust. You may also see vegetation that appears to be dead or dying for no apparent reason.

SOUND >> You may hear an unusual noise like roaring, hissing or whistling.

If You Suspect a Natural Gas Leak Or Carbon Monoxide Problem

- **GET UP, GET OUT AND CALL US from a neighbor's phone at 1.800.743.1702.** We'll respond quickly to make sure you and your family are safe.
- DO NOT smoke or operate electrical switches or appliances. They may produce a spark that might ignite the natural gas and cause an explosion.
- DO NOT assume someone else will report the condition.
- Provide the exact location, including cross streets.
- Let us know if sewer construction or digging activities are going on.

Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning; Ensure Your Heating System Is Safe

With the heating season right around the corner, here are *three* important safety tips for you to remember:

1. Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless gas that is a product of the incomplete burning of natural gas, propane, fuel oil, coal or wood. It can result from a faulty chimney, flue or vent from a heating appliance or water heater, and can cause flu-like symptoms, including headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea and loss of muscle control. Prolonged exposure to CO can lead to serious illness and even death.



To protect yourself, have your heating system and chimney, flues and vents checked once a year by a professional and purchase a CO detector for your home.

2. Leave natural gas appliance installation to the professionals. Only professional plumbing and heating contractors or appliance installers should install natural gas lines, change appliance connectors or check service lines running from the natural gas meter to your appliances.
3. Studies have linked corrugated stainless steel tubing (CSST) sometimes used for natural gas with the risk of fire due to lightning strikes. Proper bonding and grounding can reduce this risk. Consider asking the professional checking your heating system about this.

>> To find a contractor or appliance installer, check your telephone directory or visit the New York State Attorney General's Web page, knowyourcontractor.com for tips.

Pipeline Markers Show the Way

Since natural gas pipelines are underground, line markers may be used to indicate their approximate location. The markers display the material transported in the line, the name of the pipeline operator and the telephone number where the operator can be reached. Markers only indicate the pipeline's general location and cannot be relied upon to indicate the exact position.



Because many lines are not marked, it is critical that you call before you dig. Dial **811** or **Dig Safely New York** at **1.800.962.7962** prior to any excavation.



Renting and Looking for Simple Ways to Save Energy?

Here are some ways to reduce your energy use without making major investments:

- Keep your heat set at 68° or lower in the winter.
- Replace light bulbs with ENERGY STAR® -rated compact fluorescent bulbs. They use 75% less energy and last up to 10 times longer than incandescent bulbs.
- When it's cold, close curtains and blinds at night to help hold the heat in.
- Unplug power adapters and chargers when you're not using them – the same goes for microwave ovens, coffee makers and other appliances – many draw energy when not in use.
- Scrape dishes instead of rinsing them before you use the dishwasher – and use your dishwasher's no-heat drying feature.



For more energy-wise tips, visit rge.com.

Energy Resources and Services for Educators, Parents and Kids

Energy resources and services are only a click away at rge.com – click on “Giving Back” and then on “In the Schools.” There you’ll find materials on energy-related topics and resources including our:

- Grrrr the Natural Gas Safety Bear coloring book and Watts the Wizard safety posters to print and color.
- Information about the power of electricity, through our interactive Electric Universe and Energy Underground sections.



RG&E volunteers can also visit classrooms or events to promote energy awareness and safety. Our speakers are often called on to relate school work to the working world.



Having Trouble Paying Your Bills?

You may qualify for RG&E's Residential Energy Consumer Assistance Program (RECAP). RECAP includes a reduction in your basic service charge, assistance in reducing overdue amounts and referrals to community-based programs and services. You may also qualify for home weatherization assistance.

Don't delay, call us today at **1.877.266.3492** to see if you are eligible for RECAP or other assistance programs.

Help Those in Need With the Power of Your DOLLARS

The Red Cross/RG&E Heating Fund is an energy assistance fund that helps eligible customers cope with unexpected energy emergencies. You can help make sure the dollars are there to assist people this winter.

Three ways you can give:

- 1 Through automatic giving – visit rge.com or call us at **1.800.743.2110**.
- 2 Add exactly **\$1, \$2 or \$5** to your next RG&E bill payment.
- 3 Send a check payable to the Red Cross/RG&E Heating Fund to: Red Cross/ RG&E Heating Fund – American Red Cross Greater Rochester Chapter, 50 Prince Street, Rochester, NY 14607.

✓ **The Red Cross/RG&E Heating Fund is a joint effort of RG&E and the American Red Cross.**



Part of RG&E's commitment to the environment ...

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