

Energy issues

energy + time

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November-December 2007

Last Minute Winter Preparation

#1 WINTER TIP:

Heating system inspection

On the coldest night of the year, you don't want to be without heat. For safety and energy efficiency, have a qualified, licensed natural gas contractor perform a thorough inspection of your heating system as soon as possible.

Change air/furnace filters monthly

Dirty filters block airflow, increase energy bills, shorten equipment life, and could compromise safety. Pick up enough filters at the hardware store to get you through the spring thaw. Change them every month when your gas bill arrives.

Manage energy costs better on the budget plan

Take advantage of the opportunity to spread winter heating costs over the entire year. Call our automated services line at **703-750-7944** today to enroll, or visit www.washingtongas.com.

Visit the *Managing Energy Costs* section of www.washingtongas.com for more winter preparation information and updates.

MORE HELPFUL RESOURCES:

U.S. Department of Energy: www.eere.energy.gov or call **1-877-337-3463**.

Alliance to Save Energy: www.ase.org. ☉



Warmth from the Red Kettle

The Washington Area Fuel Fund (WAFF), founded by Washington Gas nearly 25 years ago, pays for all types of heating fuels to warm the homes of those in our community who need help the most. This year, Washington Gas is leading a very special project in an effort to increase funding for WAFF and provide the gift of warmth to many more families.

From November 13 - 15, Washington Gas will join The Salvation Army in an area-wide WAFF "kettle drive." Every contribution dropped into the familiar Salvation Army red kettle during this time will go directly to keeping a family warm.

If you miss the WAFF kettle drive, please visit www.waff.salarmydc.org to contribute, or call **1-888-318-9233** for help. ☉



Pipeline Safety

The Washington Gas system is part of a vast nationwide network of mostly underground pipelines that deliver natural gas. The company operates approximately 200 miles of **transmission** pipelines and thousands of miles of **distribution** pipelines.

Transmission pipe carries natural gas at high pressures from gate stations — where gas enters the system — to regulator stations, where pressure is reduced for distribution to customers. Pipeline markers indicate the presence, but not the exact location or depth, of transmission pipelines in underground rights-of-way. The markers identify the fuel, operator, and phone numbers to call *before* digging or excavating. Less than half of Washington Gas's transmission pipe is in high consequence areas, where gas leaks could have greater consequences to health, safety and the environment. **Distribution** pipelines deliver natural gas directly to customers and can cause serious injury if damaged by digging or excavating. The majority of buried distribution pipelines are *not* marked aboveground.

Therefore, whether you are planting a tree in the back yard or planning major excavation work, it's critical to have all underground utility lines in the work area or pipeline right-of-way located *before* you begin to dig — regardless of whether any type of pipeline markers are visible. It's the law, and, now, it's easier than ever to comply. Just dial **811**. Your call to **811** starts the process of having the underground utilities located and marked with bright safety paint and/or flags. *Always* call **811 before** you dig to prevent serious injury and property damage. ☉

If You Have Difficulty Paying Your Gas Bill...

Call our offices at **703-750-1000** as soon as possible to resolve the problem. The sooner you call, the better chance we have of helping you. Remember that once your account is terminated for nonpayment, a security deposit may be required, and, in most cases, the outstanding balance and a reconnection fee must be paid in full prior to the restoration of service.

Eligibility for government assistance: contact the Virginia statewide **Human Services Information and Referral Line** at **1-800-230-6977**, or visit www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit. ☉

Reminder to our Shenandoah Valley area customers:

Continue to call your local Winchester office at **540-869-1111** or **1-800-566-7436** for information related to natural gas leaks, emergencies and other safety concerns, energy assistance, billing, and other customer services.

What To Do If You Smell Natural Gas

If you suspect a natural gas leak or other gas emergency and are unsure of its severity or what to do, evacuate the area immediately and call 911 from a safe location. Never attempt to locate the source of the odor.

RECOGNIZE

Natural gas is non-toxic, colorless, odorless and combustible. For detection and safety, Washington Gas adds an unpleasant odorant called mercaptan to the majority of natural gas traveling through its pipelines. Call **202-624-6092** for a *scratch and sniff* sample brochure. Large groups may request multiple copies. Gas traveling through a small portion of our transmission pipeline is not odorized, and visible signs of a possible leak are provided below also.

REACT

If you smell natural gas, call the **Washington Gas Emergency Leak Line** at **703-750-1400** or **1-800-752-7520** outside the local calling area, or dial **911**.

If the odor is very strong, or you hear a blowing or hissing noise, vacate the building or area immediately. Warn others as you exit if possible. Leave doors unlocked as you go.

Abandon motorized equipment. Do nothing that could create an ignition source. Do not light a match or use any type of phone or battery-powered equipment. Do not turn electrical equipment or light switches on or off. Do not start a car or any type of motorized equipment.

Call **911** and the Washington Gas emergency number, **703-750-1400**, only *after* you are a safe distance away from the building or area. Follow the same precautions if you are outside and smell gas; hear hissing, blowing, or roaring noises; see dirt being thrown into the air; fire coming from the ground or appearing to burn aboveground; water bubbling or being blown into the air at a pond, creek or river; or if you see a dry spot in a moist field or dead or dying vegetation on or near a pipeline right-of-way.

Natural gas is distributed through a network of underground pipes and service lines. If a leak should occur, it is possible for gas to migrate into buildings, including those without natural gas service.

RESPOND

Washington Gas responds around the clock to natural gas leaks and other emergencies. If a leak poses an immediate threat, the company takes quick action to make the area safe. Corrective action is scheduled for a later date if there is no immediate threat.

Note: Government regulations and Washington Gas policy prohibit building an enclosed structure over a natural gas line. If you know or believe you have an enclosed structure over your gas line, please call **703-750-1000** to arrange for a safety inspection. ☎

Never use your stovetop or oven to heat your home. It could result in carbon monoxide poisoning and fire.

Insulation Education

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) suggests you may save as much as 10% on your heating and cooling bills by reducing air leaks in your home. The arrows on the house below pinpoint where most air leaks occur. About one-third of the air escapes and infiltrates through floors, walls and ceilings.

Was your home built before 1980?

Are you uncomfortably cold in the winter or hot in the summer?

Are you adding or installing new siding or roofing? If you

answer yes to any of these

questions, DOE

suggests you

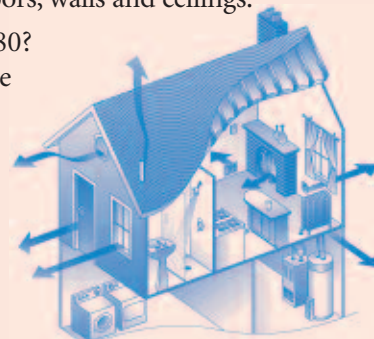
should consider adding insulation to

your home. Use the DOE

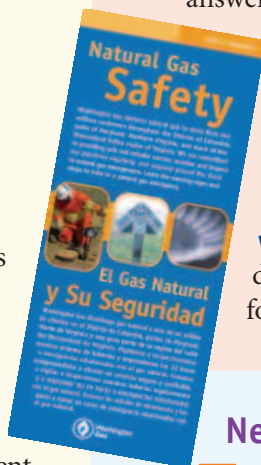
Zip Code Insulation Calculator at

www.ornl.gov/~roofs/Zip/ZipHome.html to

determine the most economic insulation level for a new or existing house. ☎



Artwork courtesy of American Gas Association



New Rate Plan to Benefit Customers

The Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC) recently approved a new rate plan for Washington Gas. Benefits of the plan for customers include the following:

1. For the next four years, the company is freezing the rate it charges customers to deliver gas.
2. A Weather Normalization Adjustment (WNA) is designed to reduce bill volatility for customers. If the weather is colder than normal between October and May of each year, the company will compute a credit for customers. If the weather during this period is warmer than normal, there will be a surcharge. The credit or surcharge will be applied annually in August to customers' bills.
3. A Performance Based Rate Plan will allow customers and investors to share in earnings — as directed by the Virginia SCC.

Washington Gas is providing customers with a credit (comprised of a refund of rates and of sales and use tax) on their bills in either November or December as stipulated by the SCC. For more details, see our related September 25, 2007, press release at www.washingtongas.com. ☎

Electronic Check Conversion

When you pay your Washington Gas bill by check, you authorize Washington Gas to clear it electronically. Your check will not be returned to you. Your payment receipt and bank statement serve as proof of payment. To opt out of the check conversion program, please call **1-888-491-8107** from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday - Friday. Please have your 10-digit Washington Gas account number available. ☎