



Washington
Gas

Maryland 2005-2006 Customer Handbook



energy + time

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Welcome

We welcome our new customers and express our continued appreciation to those of you who have been with us for a while. We thank each of you for doing business with Washington Gas.

It is our privilege to provide safe and reliable service to more than a million customers throughout the Washington metropolitan region, including more than 400,000 who live in Maryland. Your safety and the reliability of our distribution system have always been and continue to be our primary concerns.

Washington Gas and its employees have been a part of the Washington area community for more than 155 years. We share a common goal with you to keep our local neighborhoods enjoyable and thriving.

To assist you in understanding our services and policies, we provide the customer handbook on a regular basis. It includes important contact information, as well as details on natural gas safety, energy efficiency, convenient payment programs and much more. As we continuously look for ways to improve our service to you, we welcome your comments. You'll find a number of ways to reach us on pages 4-6 of the handbook.

Thank you for providing us the opportunity to count you among our many valued customers.

Sincerely,



Lauren Foley
Division Head
Customer Services

Giving Customers Choice

Washington Gas is a leading proponent of giving you the opportunity to choose your energy supply company. Customers can purchase their natural gas supply from one of a number of qualified energy supply companies or from Washington Gas—the regulated utility. The costs we pay to buy your natural gas are passed directly through to you. Qualified energy supply companies compete in the retail market for your business, and some may offer price incentives that could result in cost savings to you. More than 75,000 Maryland customers choose to buy natural gas from an energy supply company other than Washington Gas.

Regardless of which company sells you natural gas, Washington Gas continues to deliver the gas to your home through its distribution system and responds around-the-clock to any natural gas emergency. Customer choice is voluntary. If you want to continue purchasing your gas from Washington Gas, no action is necessary.

Energy supply companies serving residential and small commercial customers in Maryland must be licensed by the Maryland Public Service Commission. In response to state regulations, Washington Gas annually provides a list of customers to energy supply companies. Customers are notified through the Washington Gas newsletter of the opportunity to have their names removed from the list.

For more information, visit **www.washingtongas.com**, and click on *Customer Choice*, or call us at **703-750-1000**.

Customer Services

Contacting Us by Phone

Call us anytime you have questions, suggestions or concerns.

- Our main number is **703-750-1000**. Call Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (except major holidays). Commercial customers should call 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, and during the Saturday hours noted above. Non-English speaking customers can call the same number for translation services available in many languages, including Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, Arabic, French and others.
- **In a natural gas emergency, call 703-750-1400 or 1-800-752-7520 at any time.**
- If you live outside the local calling area, please call **1-800-752-7520**.
- For 24-hour automated bill payment and other services, call the *Special Services Line* at **703-750-7944**.
- For questions about managing your account online, call **703-750-7571**.
- Hearing-impaired customers may reach us through the nationally recognized Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) at **711** or through the Maryland Relay Service at **1-800-735-2258**.

Please see back cover for additional contact information.

Our customer service representatives are available to answer questions about your gas bill or to schedule service. Please consider the following when you call us:

- In situations that require inside access to your home, Washington Gas schedules service Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- When you have scheduled service with us, please be available at the service location and phone number you have provided. It is our policy to call approximately 15 minutes prior to our arrival to make sure that someone is home. If we cannot reach you, it may be necessary for you to call us and reschedule.

Note: Washington Gas representatives wear identification and will present it upon request. If you have concerns about whether a worker in your area is from Washington Gas or is performing work for us, call Washington Gas Security at 703-750-4370, 703-750-4246, or Customer Service at 703-750-1000.

Contacting Us by Mail

Please address all correspondence — change of address cards, comments, compliments or questions — to **Washington Gas, Customer Care, 6801 Industrial Road, Springfield, VA 22151**, unless otherwise instructed. Your letter should include:

- a daytime phone number—including area code—where you can be reached;
- a brief summary of the inquiry or problem;
- your account number and address; and
- copies of gas bills and canceled checks if the question is about billing.

Contacting Us Online

You'll find helpful information and many quick and convenient services at **www.washingtongas.com**. Click on *Contact Us* for inquiries related to your account and other services. Find information about customer services and policies, natural gas safety, energy efficiency, and heating season preparedness. Manage your Washington Gas account at the eService Center.

Meters and Meter Reading

Meters measure how much natural gas you use, and monthly bills are based on that usage. The date of the next scheduled reading appears on your gas bill, along with the current and past readings and dates. We test and replace meters according to the requirements of the Maryland Public Service Commission. Washington Gas owns and maintains the gas meter and the piping leading to the meter from the street and requires that

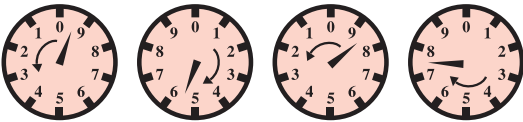
the meter and area around it be easily accessible. *It is the customer's responsibility to provide easy access to the meter.*

Reading Your Own Meter

In some areas, if we are unable to gain access to the meter, we will leave a postage-paid meter reading card. If you receive one of these cards, please record the meter reading on the card and mail it to us the next day. Other options include calling us at **703-750-1000** with your reading or emailing it to us. At the Web site, click on *Customer Service, Manage Your Account, Report Your Meter Read*. If you have a digital meter, simply record the numbers displayed.

To read a meter with dials, please do the following:

- Starting with the left dial on the row of four, locate the dial hand and record the last number it has passed.
- If the hand is between two numbers, record the lower number. If one hand is directly over a number, record that number.
- Continuing to the right, follow the same procedure for the 3 remaining dials.



The complete reading from left to right is 9587.

Remote Meter Reading

Many meters in our service territory are equipped with an automated meter reading device that combines radio and computer technologies to allow us to read your meter from a distance. Certain conditions can block the transmitted signal, and the meter reader may need to be closer to obtain the reading. Also, if your meter is equipped with this automated technology, we occasionally will require access for testing, battery replacement or repair.

Estimated Readings

Your meter has not been read if the word *Estimate* appears after the words *Current Reading* on your gas bill. Sometimes it is necessary for us to estimate readings, especially if we cannot gain access to your meter or when the automated device is not transmitting. Estimated bills are based on historical usage, actual weather and length of the billing period. Any difference between what you have been billed and what you owe is adjusted the next time an actual reading is performed. If you have a concern regarding the accuracy of your meter, please call us.

Relocating Your Meter

If you are remodeling and want your meter moved, call us at least 8 to 12 weeks before the project starts. This gives us time to schedule a site visit and prepare a written estimate of the cost to move the meter. The relocation fee will depend on the difficulty of the installation.

Gas Theft

Tampering with a gas meter can be dangerous and is a crime subject to criminal prosecution. Call the *Washington Gas Theft Hotline* at **703-750-4570** if you know or suspect this type of illegal activity. We offer a reward for each verified report of an illegal connection or stolen meter. You may leave a recorded message with your name and other contact information but are not required to identify yourself unless you wish to be considered for the reward.

Your Gas Bill

Billing Status

You may buy your natural gas from Washington Gas—the regulated utility—or from an energy supply company. Washington Gas delivers the gas through its system of pipes to your home no matter which company sells you natural gas.

- **Washington Gas Sales Service Customers** buy gas from Washington Gas.
- **Washington Gas Delivery Service Customers** buy gas from an energy supply company.

Sales Service customers receive one bill from Washington Gas. Delivery Service customers could be billed by either method as noted below and should discuss billing choices with prospective energy supply companies.

- **One bill.** This combines Washington Gas's charges and the energy supply company's charges. The bill may be provided by Washington Gas or by the energy supplier.
- **Two separate bills.** Washington Gas sends the customer a bill for the System Charge, Distribution Charge and applicable taxes. The energy supply company sends the customer a bill for the natural gas supply and any other applicable charges.

Understanding Your Charges

Whether you buy your natural gas from Washington Gas or from any energy supply company, the following services are listed on your bill:

- **Distribution Service:** This covers the cost of transporting the natural gas through the Washington Gas system to your meter. The monthly *Distribution Charge* is based on the amount of natural gas you use (stated in *therms* on your bill). Your *System Charge* covers certain costs of providing you service, including depreciation; taxes; maintenance and repair of customer lines; and customer-related expenses, such as meter reading and billing.
- **Natural Gas Supply Service:** This relates to the purchase and provision of the natural gas supply or commodity.
 - If you buy gas from **Washington Gas**, you will see the abbreviation "PGC" on your bill. This Purchased

Gas Charge includes the cost to purchase the natural gas, plus the expense of transporting it through the interstate natural gas pipeline system. By regulation, we pass these costs directly to you.

- If you buy gas from an **energy supply company**, the price should be specified in your contract with that supplier.
- **Taxes:** Imposed by your local jurisdiction, taxes are collected by our company and remitted to the appropriate taxing authorities.

For billing purposes, your natural gas usage is expressed in *therms*. A therm is a measure of the heat energy in natural gas and is approximately equal to the heat content in 100 cubic feet of natural gas, or a CCF. Your meter reading (expressed in CCF of natural gas) and an energy content conversion factor determine the total number of therms you use. More billing definitions and other important customer information are available on the back of your Washington Gas utility bill or at **www.washingtongas.com**. Click on *Customer Service*.

Gaslights

Many newer gaslight installations are metered. Older gaslights may be unmetered and are billed at a fixed usage, itemized on the bill as *Unmetered Gaslight*. A typical two-mantle residential gaslight consumes about 219 therms annually. If you turn an unmetered gaslight on or off, please let us know immediately so we can bill you correctly.

Rate Schedules

The billing items previously described are covered in rate schedules showing the amount the Maryland Public Service Commission allows us to charge. Residential service is covered under Rate Schedules No. 1 and 1A. For copies of rate schedules and general service provisions, visit **www.washingtongas.com** and click on *Tariffs/Rates*, or call us at **703-750-1000**.

Paying Your Gas Bill

Payment Options

Please check your bill to make sure that the name and address on your account are correct. This helps us provide you more efficient service should there be any questions or concerns regarding your account. Please call **703-750-1000** with any changes.

By Mail: Return your remittance stub with your **check or money order** — *never cash*. Write your 10-digit account number on your check or money order for proper credit of your payment. *Do not include any correspondence with your payment or write on or make requests on the stub.*

If you send your payment in an envelope other than the one we provide, address it to **Washington Gas, P.O. Box 830036, Baltimore, MD 21283-0036**. Sending the payment to any other address will delay processing.

By Phone: Use our automated *Special Services Line*, **703-750-7944**, to pay your bill with your personal checking account or by credit card. When paying by check, you'll need the bank's *routing number* and your *checking account number*, which are listed at the bottom of the check. The *routing number* consists of the first 9 digits, and your *checking account number* is the second set of digits. *Please do not use the last set of digits in the row — this is your check number.*

Online: Log onto **www.washingtongas.com** to view or pay your current gas bill quickly and securely. Use your personal checking account or credit card.

If you pay your gas bill through your online banking service, be sure the account number you enter matches the 10-digit account number printed on your Washington Gas bill.

Note: Credit card payments are processed by a credit card processor, not Washington Gas. At the time of

printing this handbook, the credit card processor was charging a service fee of \$5.95 per transaction. This service fee may change without notice.

In Person:

Washington Gas Main Office: Pay by check, money order or cash at 101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20080, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

Washington Gas Anacostia/Congress Heights Office: Pay by check or money order only at 3101 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20032, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

Drop Boxes: In **Maryland**, use the 24-hour drop box available in the parking lot of our Forestville office at 4000 Forestville Road. In **Virginia**, a 24-hour drop box is located in the parking lot of our Springfield location at 6801 Industrial Road. In the **District of Columbia**, customers will find drop boxes at our main office and Anacostia locations. *Washington Gas accepts only checks and money orders at drop boxes.*

Western Union: You may pay your gas bill through the Quick Collect service at locations nationwide. Call Western Union at **1-800-325-6000** for the location nearest you and for applicable Western Union service fees.

Returned Checks and Late Payment Charges

We charge a fee for a returned check or returned electronic payment, and require cash, certified check or money order for the amount of the returned check.

Payments are due on or before the due date shown on your bill. If we do not receive your payment by the due date, a late charge is assessed at the rate of 1.5 percent per month for the first 2 months on the unpaid balance, then 2 percent per month to a maximum of 5 percent on the unpaid balance.

If you buy gas from an energy supply company, Maryland Public Service Commission regulations require that payments on your account be applied as follows:

First, to any past due amount owed to Washington Gas for utility-related charges; then, to any past due amount owed to an energy supply company, if applicable, for the cost of gas; next, to any current amount due Washington Gas; then, to any current amount due the energy supply company; and, finally, to any other non-regulated purchase that is on the bill.

Payment Plans

The **Budget Plan** spreads the cost of winter heating over the entire year. We calculate your average monthly payment based on historical natural gas usage, adjusted for normal weather, and projected gas costs. Periodically, we review your account to determine that our monthly estimate is on target. Each month, your bill will show actual gas usage and bill amounts, along with budget installments, so you can review the information.

If actual gas costs, weather and/or usage differ significantly from our original estimate, an adjustment in your monthly budget payment may be necessary to prevent significant charges or credits at the end of your budget year. You also may request an adjustment to your installment. You will receive a message on your bill if your monthly budget payment amount has changed.

Your twelfth monthly bill will reflect the last budget installment of your budget cycle – adjusted for the difference between actual and budgeted gas usage. Overpayments are credited to your account unless a refund is requested. If you use more gas than you pay for, you owe the company the difference.

The Budget Plan is designed as a 12-month program, and we encourage you to stay on it year-round to realize the potential benefits. Remember that continued participation in the plan depends upon your ability to make the monthly budget payment. A late payment or

failure to pay typically results in removal from the plan, and the full amount of the account balance becomes due. For more information, or to enroll, click on *Customer Service*, then *Budget Plan* at our Web site, or call the automated *Special Services Line* at **703-750-7944**. Please have your Washington Gas account number available.

Please call us if you choose to purchase natural gas from an energy supply company, and you want to participate in the Budget Plan.

The **Automated Payment Plan** allows your payment to be deducted automatically from your checking account and electronically transferred to us on the day your bill is due. At the Web site, click on *Customer Service*, then *Automatic Payment Plan* for program information.

The **Payment Extension Plan** can extend the due date for customers—usually individuals whose main source of income is a monthly government or pension check—who purchase gas from Washington Gas and receive their bills after the 10th of the month. With this plan, the due date (last day to pay without a penalty) of your current monthly gas bill is extended to the 5th of the next month, making it easier for you to apply a portion of your assistance payment to your gas bill. There is no late charge if the payment for your gas bill is received by the extended due date. For details, call us.

For more information about payment plans, click on *Customer Service*, *Manage Your Account*, and *Customer Publications* at our Web site. Download the *Payment Plans* brochure, or call us.

Service Initiation and Termination

Applying for Service

Contact us by phone, postal mail or email to begin natural gas service. See the sections below for more details on initiating and terminating service.

Security Deposit

A security deposit may be required to open or maintain an account. All deposits earn simple interest at a rate approved by the Maryland Public Service Commission. After 12 months, Washington Gas refunds the deposit, plus interest, if the customer has paid all bills for that 12-month period on time. Deposits cannot be used to pay a current or a delinquent bill.

Moving

- To initiate or discontinue service, please notify us at least 3 business days prior to the time you request service. There is a fee to initiate service.
- If you have gas appliances with electronic ignition, your electric service must be on before we turn gas on to your appliances. If you have a gas water heater, your water also must be on.
- For convenience, customers may go to our Web site to submit a secure online form to start or stop natural gas service. Click on the *Moving* button on the right side of the home page. A customer service representative will contact you if there are any questions, or if we require access to your meter for a final reading. If you don't have online access, please call us. Failure to notify Washington Gas will prevent us from closing your account, and you will be responsible for all subsequent charges until your account has been settled.
- If the new occupant placed an order to leave the gas service on, you may read the meter and phone in your reading to us.

Note: If you move during the winter and the gas service is turned off, the water pipes could freeze.

Smooth Moves Program

This program features a written agreement between Washington Gas and property managers and/or

landlords that transfers a tenant's gas service to the landlord when a tenant informs Washington Gas that he or she is moving. Then, 48 hours before a new tenant is scheduled to occupy a unit, the tenant completes a "moving in" form, and there is no disruption in gas service. Click on *Property Managers* at the Web site to request your Smooth Moves enrollment packet, or call us.

Emergency Turn-Off

In an emergency, we may turn off your natural gas service without notice. We also do this if the gas meter has been tampered with or if there has been a violation of federal, state or local safety codes. We restore service as soon as possible, but if safety violations exist, your gas equipment must be repaired before service is restored.

Disconnection

If you have trouble paying a bill or a security deposit, or if there is some other problem, please notify us. We make every effort to work out a solution before we terminate natural gas service.

Note: If you have received a disconnection notice and your gas is still on, please call Customer Service at 703-750-1000, or see a representative at a Washington Gas payment office to pay the agreed amount and avoid disconnection.

Before we disconnect your service for a reason other than an emergency or meter tampering, we will send you a written notice of termination on your bill at least 14 days before the date that termination is scheduled to occur. The past due amount of your bill must be paid on or before the termination date stated on the bill notice to avoid disconnection. The due date for the remaining current balance also is specified.

If your service is disconnected, service can be restored when violations are corrected and outstanding bills are paid. A reconnection fee is charged, and a deposit will

be required prior to reconnection if your gas has been turned off for non-payment. Payment to restore service can be made in one of the following ways:

- through our automated phone service at **703-750-7944**, or online at **www.washingtongas.com**, using your checking account, or credit card (*Be sure to call 703-750-1000 to provide the customer service representative your confirmation number.*);
- in person at one of our walk-in offices for the exact amount due; or
- by mail.

Remember that you will need to contact Washington Gas at **703-750-1000** to set up an order to reconnect your service once your payment has been made. If you choose to pay by mail, the gas is not turned on until we have received the payment and it has been posted to the account.

Note: Washington Gas payments made by credit cards are processed by a credit card processor, not Washington Gas. At the time of printing this handbook, the credit card processor was charging a service fee of \$5.95 per transaction. This fee may change without notice.

Dispute Procedures

To dispute service turn-off or your bill amount, please contact a customer service representative at **703-750-1000** or **1-800-752-7520** to review your case. If you disagree with our findings, you may contact the Office of External Relations at the Maryland Public Service Commission for assistance. Call **1-800-492-0474** or **1-410-767-8028**, or write to the Commission at: Office of External Relations, 6 St. Paul Street, 12th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202. Visit the Web site at **www.psc.state.md.us**.

Avoiding Turn-Offs for the Ill, Disabled and Elderly

If a member of your household is seriously ill, disabled, elderly, or relies on life support equipment, we take special steps to avoid turning off your natural gas service. Please inform us of these circumstances, in advance, in the event that a turn-off is warranted. We require a written statement from a doctor or an official source to prevent the turn-off. In addition, the customer must make satisfactory arrangements to pay the unpaid bills.

Third-Party Notification

The **Third-Party Notification Program** can help you avoid a disconnection if you are out of town for long periods, ill or have difficulty handling your affairs. Washington Gas sends a copy of your disconnection notice to a third party of your choice. The third party is not responsible for payment but will be notified about the impending service disruption in time to help. Call us at **703-750-1000** for details.

Disconnection During Winter

The Maryland Public Service Commission has special procedures covering the disconnection of natural gas service from November 1 - March 31. We will certify to the Commission, in advance of a turn-off, that disconnection does not threaten the health of the occupants. We also verify we have taken steps to inform the customer about state energy assistance programs.

Safety

Remember, if at anytime you are concerned about your safety, call 911.

If You Smell Natural Gas

Natural gas is non-toxic, colorless, tasteless and odorless. For your safety, we add an unpleasant odorant called mercaptan so you will be able to detect escaping natural gas. Call us to receive a scratch-and-sniff sample of mercaptan.

- If you smell natural gas, call our *Emergency Leak Line* at **703-750-1400** or **1-800-752-7520** outside the local calling area. *Do not attempt to locate the source of the odor.*
- If the odor is very strong or you hear a blowing or hissing noise, vacate the building *immediately*, leaving doors unlocked as you go. 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 or start your car. Call **911** and the appropriate Washington Gas emergency numbers as instructed above *only* after you have reached a safe distance away from the building. Follow the same precautions if you are outside and smell gas, hear hissing or blowing noises, or see dirt being thrown into the air.

We distribute natural gas 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.

Note: When calling us from another location to report a natural gas leak or other gas emergency at your home, please give the customer service representative the address or phone number where you can be reached, so we can gain unimpeded access to the house if necessary.

Responding to Your Call

When notified of a natural gas leak, Washington Gas dispatches trained technicians to the scene 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If a leak poses an immediate threat, the technician will take quick action to make the area safe. If a natural gas leak does not pose an immediate threat, other corrective action will be scheduled for a later date. This prioritization process helps the company to ensure the safety of all its customers while allocating resources more efficiently;

coordinating necessary work with customers' schedules; and minimizing traffic disruptions.

Excess Flow Valves

An excess flow valve (EFV) may reduce the consequences of a gas leak in the event of a break in the outside service line. EFVs are designed to shut down the natural gas flow to your home and reduce the likelihood of unrestricted gas flow from the broken line. Since January 1999, in response to government regulation, Washington Gas has installed EFVs at no additional charge on all new elevated pressure natural gas service lines that serve a single residence and in cases where elevated pressure service lines serving a single residence must be replaced. We can install an EFV on your existing natural gas service line if it serves a single residence. The cost is likely to range between \$1,000 and \$2,000, and may be higher, depending on the time, labor and site restoration requirements necessary to install the EFV. Please call us for additional information.

Emergency Preparedness

Washington Gas does not recommend that customers shut off natural gas service as a preventive or preparatory action in the event of an emergency. Washington Gas's natural gas distribution system is divided into sections that, in such an event, can be isolated from the rest of the system and shut down for repairs or as a safety precaution. If for any reason customers do shut off gas service to their homes or businesses, they should call us at **703-750-1000** to restore service. **Customers should not attempt to restore natural gas service themselves.** Customers who want to learn how to shut off natural gas service to their homes or businesses should contact a licensed plumber or a licensed heating and cooling professional.

Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, toxic gas, created when fossil fuels are not burned completely. Many CO-related incidents involve car exhausts, but some result from blocked furnace/boiler vents and chimneys, and from improperly adjusted or inadequately maintained appliances.

Warning signs of CO in your home can include stuffy, stale air; lingering pungent odor; condensation on windows; back drafts from a fireplace, furnace or water-heating chimney; soot; yellow burner flames (except from natural gas fireplaces and logs); burner flames or pilot lights that flutter or keep going out. If you detect these warning signs, *turn off the equipment, introduce fresh air to the building and call a qualified, licensed natural gas contractor* to have the equipment inspected.

Symptoms of CO poisoning can include dizziness, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, headaches, ringing in the ears, blurred vision, stinging eyes and fainting. If you suspect CO poisoning, leave the building immediately to seek fresh air and call **911** from a neighbor's house.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends that you place CO alarms in hallways near every separate sleeping area, and install smoke alarms on each level of your house. Place smoke alarms near bedrooms and also inside every bedroom. Change the batteries in your CO and smoke alarms at least twice a year.

Using Gas Appliances Safely

Many gas appliances have open burners. Older models also have pilot lights that burn continuously. It is very important to keep the area around your appliances clear of *all* flammable objects and substances, particularly gasoline and any fuel containers, paints, adhesives, cleaning solvents, and oily rags, which create a fire hazard.

In addition, any natural gas appliance located in a garage or similar location must be installed according to the applicable building code, so that all burners and burner ignition devices are at least 18 inches above the floor. Don't use or store flammable products, such as those mentioned above, in the same room or area where a water heater or any other gas appliance is installed.

Warning signs to check for in a gas appliance that can indicate carbon monoxide is being produced include a predominantly yellow flame, soot or a lingering pungent odor.

Keep your gas appliance owner's manuals available and refer to them regularly. Some additional tips on the safe and efficient use of appliances are provided below:

- Have a *qualified, licensed heating professional* perform an annual pre-winter inspection of your natural gas **heating equipment** — including furnaces, boilers and/or unvented space heaters. If you see or suspect something is wrong with your heating system, turn it off immediately and call a repair service.
- Clean or replace **air filters** every month during the heating and cooling seasons and every three months during the rest of the year to help your **system** operate properly and efficiently.
- **Range-top burners** or **ovens** should **never** be used for home-heating purposes. Continuous burning can lead to the production of carbon monoxide and create fire hazards.
- **Dryer exhaust piping** should be kept free of lint buildup. Heavy lint buildup in the dryer exhaust can cause a fire.
- Lowering the temperature of your **water heater** can prevent scalding accidents. **Do not** turn your water heater temperature above 120 degrees Fahrenheit. **Warm** or **Low** should be the appropriate setting on most water heater dials that do not have numbers.

- If you have an **automatic dishwasher** and the manufacturer recommends a *Normal* temperature setting for your hot water heater, ask your plumber about anti-scald devices for shower and sink taps.
- When installing **gas logs** or **inserts** in a conventional wood-burning fireplace, special attention must be given to the manufacturer's specification for venting. Many log sets need a fully open chimney damper when burning, and some require direct venting to the outside. In Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission allows the installation of ventless fireplaces and space heaters.
- **Gas grills** must be lighted with the top open. A natural gas grill intended for outdoor use should never be used indoors.

For more information on the safe use of natural gas appliances and systems, click on *Energy Information* at the Web site. View *Using Natural Gas Safely*, *Understanding Natural Gas* and other safety materials, or call for free copies.

Underground Digging

When planning any outdoor home improvement, landscaping or construction project that requires digging or excavating, have underground utility lines located and marked. Call *Miss Utility* at **1-800-257-7777** at least *2 full business days* (excluding weekends and holidays) before you start to dig or begin construction.

Miss Utility is a free service for locating and marking buried utility lines on your property using high-visibility safety paint and/or flags. These markings show where the lines are buried before you dig so you can avoid damaging a utility line. Damage to underground utility lines may cause serious injuries, costly repairs and service outages for you and your neighbors. **Don't begin your project until you are sure the lines have been marked.**

Gas Pipe Maintenance

Washington Gas owns and maintains all natural gas pipe *up to and including the gas meter*. We strive to provide safe, reliable service while making sure the gas pipe owned by the company is properly maintained.

It is your responsibility to monitor and maintain the natural gas lines *on your side* of the meter — whether or not they are visible. Therefore, have your gas lines checked periodically to prohibit corrosion or leaks, and have them repaired by a qualified, licensed natural gas contractor if any unsafe condition is detected.

Federal and state 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 locating inspection.

Energy Assistance

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

Washington Gas has supported the **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program** for many years. Through this program, the federal government distributes funds to the states which, in turn, give grants to qualified applicants to help them pay their energy bills.

Maryland Energy Assistance Program

The **Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP)** assists eligible customers in paying their winter heating bills. Grants are based on family size, income and the type of fuel used for heating. The grant is made only once each heating season.

Utility Service Protection Program

The **Utility Service Protection Program (USPP)** is available to residential customers who are eligible for

MEAP aid. With USPP, customers receive a natural gas bill for the same amount each month throughout the year. Payment plans for customers depend on natural gas usage from the previous year and the outstanding balance owed on a customer's gas bill. The program begins the first week of November. Customers must complete applications for the Maryland Energy Assistance Program in their county.

- **Charles, Calvert, St. Mary's Counties
Southern Maryland Tri-County
Community Action Committee, Inc.**

8371 Leonardtown Road, Hughesville, MD 20637

For Mail Correspondence:

P.O. Box 280, Hughesville, MD 20637

301-870-3770, Ext. 200 or 1-800-255-5313, Ext. 200

- **Frederick County Department of Social Services**

100 East All Saints Street, Frederick, MD 21701

For Mail Correspondence: P.O. Box 237

Frederick, MD 21705-0237

301-694-2410

- **Montgomery County
Department of Health and Human Services**

1301 Piccard Drive, Rockville, MD 20850

240-777-4450

- **Prince George's County
Department of Social Services**

425 Brightseat Road, Landover, MD 20785

301-909-6300

Weatherization Assistance Program

This program provides home weatherization services, such as weather-stripping, caulking and plastic window covering, at no cost to eligible families.

For more information on energy assistance programs, call the Maryland Department of Human Resources

Energy Hotline at **1-800-352-1446**, or visit

www.dhr.state.md.us/meap.

Washington Area Fuel Fund (WAFF)

Founded by Washington Gas and administered by The Salvation Army, the **Washington Area Fuel Fund (WAFF)** helps families who do not qualify for, or who have exhausted, government energy assistance. WAFF pays for *all* types of fuel to heat homes during the winter. Washington Gas pays the administrative costs of the fund so 100% of WAFF contributions go to those who need assistance.

WAFF funds are available January 1 - May 31. Contact The Salvation Army at **1-888-318-WAFF (318-9233)** to receive details on the location and phone number for the office in your locality.

You can contribute to WAFF in the following ways:

- **Make a fixed monthly contribution using a pledge form.** The contribution will be included automatically in your monthly gas bill, and you can cancel it at any time. Call us to obtain a pledge form. (If you have pledged a fixed amount, please *do not* check the *Washington Area Fuel Fund* box on your gas bill.)
- **Add a donation to your gas bill payment whenever you choose.** Simply check the box located on your gas bill stub, write in your donation amount and add that amount to your gas payment. It's a one-time contribution until you decide to donate again.
- **Contribute when paying your gas bill online or by phone.** Log onto **www.washingtongas.com**, or call our automated *Special Services Line* at **703-750-7944**.
- **Mail a contribution.** Make your check payable to WAFF and send it to P.O. Box 1999, Washington, DC 20013.

Senior WarmLine

Our **Senior WarmLine** has been set up to speed services to our senior customers. The WarmLine telephone number is **202-797-WARM (797-9276)**. It's available Monday-Friday, during normal business hours, to individuals and organizations serving senior citizens. For a copy of *Special Services for Seniors*, go to **www.washingtongas.com** or call us.

Gas Appliance Information

Buyer's Guides

Although Washington Gas does not sell appliances, you can call **703-237-HOME (237-4663)** or **1-800-980-8881** to request information about gas appliances. Washington Gas publishes free Buyer's guides to provide information about selection, purchase and installation of natural gas fireplaces, heating, water heating and natural gas products for your home. At **www.washingtongas.com**, click on *Natural Gas Home Products*. As with all major purchases, you may want to shop around to get the price, service and terms that are best for you.

Making Appliances Safe

We respond immediately and without charge to any natural gas emergency, such as escaping gas or a malfunctioning appliance. As a result, we may be required to turn off gas service to your home or appliance. If your appliance requires repair or replacement, you will be advised to call a *qualified, licensed natural gas contractor*. As with any major service or repair, you may wish to shop around to get the services and terms that are best for you.

Washington Gas Contact Information

Customer Services (translation services available)	703-750-1000
If You Smell Natural Gas	703-750-1400
Outside the Local Calling Area	1-800-752-7520
Special Services Line (24-hour automated self-service)	703-750-7944
Telecommunication Relay Service/TTY	711
Miss Utility Locating Service (MD)	1-800-257-7777
Senior WarmLine	202-797-WARM
Natural Gas Products and Appliances	703-237-HOME or 1-800-980-8881
Natural Gas Fireplace/Log Information	703-941-LOGS
Natural Gas Availability and Conversions	703-941-HEAT
Gas Theft Hotline	703-750-4570
Web Site	www.washingtongas.com

This handbook is prepared and distributed in compliance with regulations of the Maryland Public Service Commission. Rates and charges discussed are for residential customers only. All programs and charges listed in this book are those in effect at the time of printing and are subject to change. Call 703-750-1000 for additional copies.

Este manual del cliente es disponible en español si lo solicita. Llámenos al 703-750-1000 para obtener una copia.

