



billing OPTIONS

When it comes to your payments, you deserve options.

Minnesota Energy Resources gives you several ways to make paying your monthly bill faster, easier and a lot more convenient.

Budget Billing spreads your energy charges out evenly over the coming year, helping you better manage energy costs. No matter how much energy you use, you can be assured you'll be paying the same amount every month for 12 months.* Then, your next year's budget calculation will reflect any difference between what you paid and the actual cost of the energy you used throughout the year. Find out more or enroll at minnesotaenergyresources.com/home/budget.aspx

Automatic Payment eliminates monthly payment tasks with an automatic withdrawal from your bank account. Have your bill paid automatically within three days of its due date every month. Find out more or enroll at minnesotaenergyresources.com/home/automatic.aspx

Quick Payment lets you use your credit card, debit card or checking account to pay your Minnesota Energy Resources bill instantly by phone or online, 24 hours a day.** To learn more, visit minnesotaenergyresources.com/home/quick.aspx

You deserve options. Minnesota Energy Resources has them.

*At the sixth month, your payment amount may be adjusted to more closely reflect your actual use.

**Our bill-processing partner charges a \$3.95 service fee per transaction.

CONNECTING with us

visit us online
minnesotaenergyresources.com

24-hour customer service
800-889-9508

24-hour gas emergency
800-889-4970

call before you dig
811

ServiceChoice®
800-889-3479



CUSTOMER CONNECTION is published monthly by Minnesota Energy Resources. Questions or comments can be sent to: Customer Communications Department
Customer Connection
P.O. Box 19001
Green Bay, WI 54307-9001

WPS-48-I-MERCC

CUSTOMER connection

Ideas, Advice and News from Minnesota Energy Resources

September 2010

inside:

- Educational Guide to Natural Gas
- Energy-Saving Tips
- Business Corner
- Billing Options



minnesotaenergyresources.com

Natural gas is a clean-burning, low-cost source of energy used to heat homes, generate electricity and power factories all over our country. Much of America's natural gas comes from the south, southwest and Canada, all transported by a network of underground pipelines. Natural gas is also stored in rock formations and piped to other locations when needed. Because the pipelines are out of sight, we want to tell you about some important safety tips that could save your life.

Facts About Natural Gas. Natural gas is almost 40% lighter than air, so it rises and quickly spreads out in open areas. In an enclosed room or building, natural gas first displaces air at ceiling level, and then it moves down towards the floor.

Natural gas is not toxic. However, large concentrations of natural gas will displace air in enclosed spaces and suffocation can occur. Natural gas cannot burn by itself. For it to burn, natural gas must be mixed with a precise amount of air. It must have an ignition source, such as a pilot light, a lighted match or an electric arc from a light switch, motor, doorbell or telephone.

If natural gas does ignite, let it burn. Do not attempt to put out the flame until the source of gas is eliminated. Natural gas is not liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). LPGs, such as propane, are different from natural gas because they are heavier than air and collect in low places.

What To Do If You Smell Natural Gas. It's important to be alert for the distinctively unpleasant odor of natural gas. If the gas odor is strong, don't look for the source of the gas leak. Get out immediately! Do not light a match, do not turn lights or appliances on or off and do not use the telephone. Instead, go to a neighbor's house and call 911, then call Minnesota Energy Resources' emergency line at **800-889-4970** (we will respond promptly at no charge).

Signs Of A Natural Gas Leak Include:

- Distinct natural gas odor similar to rotten eggs
- Blowing, hissing sound or bubbling in a wet or flooded area
- Unexplained areas of dead vegetation where the surrounding area is green

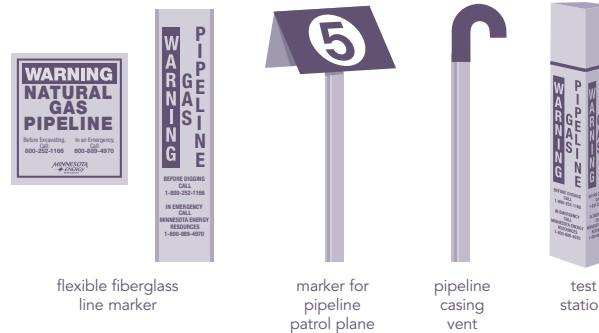
How Do You Locate Buried Piping?

Before starting any project that involves digging, the buried gas piping must be located in advance. Call **811** and ask to have the pipeline and all other facilities located; this service is free. Allow at least two full working days for utility companies to respond and locate all facilities in the area.

The paint and/or flag markings put on the ground by the gas utility company may be relied on to give the approximate location of the facilities. Remember, hand exposure of all facilities is required. Never assume that your equipment won't hit the facilities because you think they are located at a greater depth.

To determine where high pressure transmission pipelines are located in your community, visit the National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS) Web site at www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov and search by your county or zip code.

Gas And Pipeline Permanent Markers. Gas and pipeline transmission companies use the following types of permanent markers to indicate the presence of gas lines in the area. These markers usually are not set over the pipeline but are used to indicate gas pipelines are in the area.



Questions? Call **800-889-9508**.

energy-saving TIPS

Fall into savings! Minnesota Energy Resources offers these smart energy-saving tips to reduce your energy usage and your monthly bill. Try them this month and see your savings really add up.

Drop your monthly energy bill by 10%. Reducing air leaks in your home is a easy way to save energy and money. The most common places where air escapes your home are: floors, walls, ceilings, ducts, fireplaces, doors, windows, fans, vents and electrical outlets.

Cut a laundry load's energy use by 50%. About 90% of the energy used for washing clothes in conventional top-load washers

the BENEFITS of natural gas

For today's businesses, natural gas is the way to go. Natural gas outperforms and costs less than many other forms of energy. Whether your business is using hot water, keeping up with laundry and pools, cooking or doing any other tasks using natural gas, the benefits are staggering. Natural gas just works better.

- **Natural gas heats water better.** Gas water heaters heat more water per hour than electric water heaters at about 1/2 the cost!
- **Natural gas cooks better.** Cooking with natural gas gives you total control—no waiting for the burner to warm up or cool down. Natural gas equipment tends to cook food faster and more evenly, while operating at about 50% of the cost of an electric range.
- **Natural gas dries clothes better.** Gas clothes dryers outperform electric dryers by more than 3 to 1 and provide significant cost savings, without sacrificing performance or features.
- **Natural gas heats pools and spas better.** Gas heaters are 1/2 the cost of electric heaters and are the least expensive way to heat your pool or spa.



is for heating the water. Cut a load's energy use in half by switching your temperature setting from hot to warm. Save even more by using the cold setting.

Prevent up to 97% of radiant heat loss. Use a water heater blanket to ensure your unit is working efficiently. Gas or electric water heater blankets prevent up to 97% of radiant heat loss. They are easy to install and virtually pay for themselves in energy savings.

Visit minnesotaenergyresources.com for more energy-saving tips.