

ENERGY CONNECTIONS

JANUARY 2014

Warm Up to Savings



When the weather outside is cold and frightful, your home can stay warm and delightful. On a frosty day, a toasty home can be a welcomed retreat from the chill. To stay warm without wasting energy, follow these energy-saving heating tips:

Heating your home

- Set your thermostat to 68 degrees when you are home during the day and reduce it a few degrees at night or when you are away. Wear warm clothes like sweaters, or get cozy and comfortable with a blanket.
- Don't block heating registers. Move furniture to allow heat to flow freely and make sure all return air openings are unobstructed.
- Have your heating system professionally serviced to ensure everything is working properly
- Restrict the use of your wood fireplace in extremely cold weather as it can rob your home of heat provided by your heating system. When the fireplace is not in use, be sure the damper is closed.

Heating your water

- Install aerating, low-flow faucets and showerheads.
- Repair any leaky faucets or drips.
- Check the thermostat on your water heater; a setting of 120 degrees provides comfortable hot water for most uses.

- Insulate all accessible hot water pipes, especially within ten feet of the water heater. Insulation reduces heat loss and can keep water temperatures 2 degrees to 4 degrees hotter than uninsulated pipes do, allowing you to lower your water temperature setting. Also, hot water will be delivered more quickly, which helps conserve water. Polyethylene or neoprene foam pipe sleeves are the most commonly used insulation. Match the pipe sleeve's inside diameter to the pipe's outside diameter for a snug fit. Place the pipe sleeve so the seam faces down on the pipe. Keep insulation at least six inches from the flue.
- Wrap the water heater tank with an insulating blanket to help hold heat in the tank. Follow the installation instructions.

For more energy-saving tips, visit NorthWesternEnergy.com.

Stay Warm and Safe

It's extremely important to keep your outdoor natural gas meter clear of snow and ice. Carefully remove snow or ice from the gas meter and any associated piping and take care not to cover meters when shoveling or snow-blowing. Also, check to ensure that melting snow or ice is not dripping on the meter from the roof or nearby trees, and that the meter is clear following rooftop snow removal.

The natural gas meter's outdoor regulator vent must always be clear so that the flow of natural gas into the home can be regulated properly. If this vent becomes plugged when snow and ice on or above the meter melts and re-freezes, the pressure of gas being pumped into the home could either increase or decrease to a dangerous level, resulting in a fire or explosion.

You should check for any ice buildup around all external vents as well as your dryer vents. If you have a gas dryer, ice can keep harmful gases from escaping your home. Any airflow blockage can lead to big problems and even carbon monoxide poisoning.

Be safe and take extra precautions after major storms. If you experience a power outage, don't assume we know about it. Call our 24/7 emergency phone number or report an outage through our online customer service option.



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Know the Signs



Stay safe and help prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Natural gas isn't poisonous, but like other fuels, it produces carbon monoxide gas as it burns, and the carbon monoxide must be vented properly. It is important to use natural gas safely and to know what to do in an emergency. Make sure furnace and appliance vents are clear of obstructions and working properly to vent carbon monoxide from your residence. Carbon monoxide is an odorless, tasteless, invisible gas. Similar to the flu, the

first indications of carbon monoxide poisoning are dizziness, fatigue, nausea, mental confusion, and heart palpitations.

If you suspect someone is suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning:

- Get the person into fresh air.
- Open doors and windows.
- Seek medical attention immediately.
- Call 911

Properly equip your home or business with a carbon monoxide detector. You'll find one at almost any home improvement or hardware store, and having one will give you an added sense of security. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions when placing a detector in your home.

The New Year is a perfect time to do a battery check around your home or business. Keeping fresh batteries in your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms promotes peace of mind, not to mention avoiding that annoying chirping sound!

In the News

Here are some recent news highlights that were reported in local media. And remember to check us out on your favorite social media networks to stay current with the latest company news!

- NorthWestern leaders rang the NYSE closing bell on December 11. "It's exciting and a great honor to represent Montana, South Dakota, and Nebraska at the NYSE today," said Bob Rowe, NorthWestern's president and CEO. "It's the culmination of an invigorating few days of sharing our story with current and future investors. We have a lot to be proud of as we embark on our second century of service to the communities we serve."
- NorthWestern Energy completed the \$70.2 million purchase (subject to customary post-closing adjustments) of operating and non-operating natural gas production interests in northern Montana's Bear Paw Basin from Devon Energy Production Company, L.P. This purchase also includes Devon's 82 percent interest in the Havre Pipeline Company, LLC. Twenty-nine former Devon employees accepted positions with NorthWestern, bringing the company's total Havre-area workforce to approximately 70 employees.
- The company again warned residential and business customers about an attempted scam involving collection of allegedly overdue utility bills. NorthWestern reminds customers to be vigilant when it comes to anyone seeking payment information on utility bills, either in person or via the telephone or Internet. The phone callers can be convincing. They might use "spoofing" software that lets them falsely display the name and phone number of the utility company on the recipient's Caller ID. NorthWestern will provide several past-due notices before terminating service. If you get a notification, always verify it by dialing the customer service number on your utility bill. Don't supply any personal information unless you are sure you are indeed working with the utility. NorthWestern never asks customers to use a prepaid debit card for payment. Get more tips on how to protect yourself by visiting the resources available from the Better Business Bureau.

Now We're Cooking

Featured recipe from the
NorthWestern Energy Centennial Cookbook

Chicken Bisque Soup

3 pounds chicken (all you need is stock or you can use canned chicken broth)
8-10 cups water, enough to cover chicken
3 tablespoons salt
1/2 cup butter
1 cup flour
1 celery stalk cut up
4 carrots peeled
2 medium onions quartered
1/2 cup green pepper
1 teaspoon Accent® flavor enhancer
2 drops yellow food coloring

In a large stockpot boil chicken until tender and strain off 8 cups of broth or use canned chicken broth to equal 8 cups; set aside. Melt 1/2 cup butter and add to 1 cup of flour. Stir to make a paste (best to add little stock to paste so it will not lump in stock). Slowly add paste to the warm stock in a stockpot and bring mixture to a boil. Let it simmer for about 15 minutes or until soup takes on a glaze. Add all chopped vegetables, 1 teaspoon Accent seasoning and 2 drops food coloring. Stir constantly for it will burn easily at this point. Simmer until vegetables are soft. Add to a food processor and blend until smooth.

Submitted by:

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