



Prepare for Higher Natural Gas Bills This Winter

Prices for natural gas have not significantly declined after spiking last winter due to world events and market conditions. Plan for natural gas unit costs to be similar to last winter. Monthly utility bills are also affected by weather. In continued periods of very low temperatures, your home's natural gas usage will go up.

Ways to Reduce Energy Use and Manage Bills

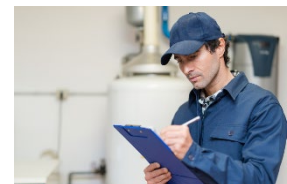
Check off these easy, free things now:



- Set your thermostat as low as is comfortable.** Adjust settings to keep it cooler for sleeping and when you are away from the home. A programmable thermostat can automatically adjust the indoor temperature to reduce energy use.
- Make sure your air registers and radiators aren't blocked** by furniture, rugs, curtains or other objects. Dust or vacuum registers or radiators on a regular basis.
- Change the direction of your ceiling fan** to push warm air down from the ceiling.
- Close your curtains at night.** This can help reduce heat loss in the room up to 10%. During the day, open south-facing drapes and shades to take advantage of sunshine.
- Set your water heater to 120 degrees.** The U.S. Department of Energy recommends setting your water heater to 120° F, which is not enough to cause scalding but is still hot enough to keep diseases at bay and be relatively energy efficient.
- Wash and dry only full loads of laundry** and use the cold-water setting. Use a clothes rack or indoor clothesline to dry clothes instead of a dryer. If you run the dryer, clean the lint screen after every load to improve air circulation.

Look for leaks and keep up with maintenance:

- Have your furnace serviced** each year to make sure it is working safely and efficiently. Clean or replace filters once a month or as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Seal leaks to keep heat inside.** Heat lost through leaky windows accounts for 10-25% of your overall heating bill (energy.gov). Find and fix any leaks in your air ducts. Use weather stripping for leaky windows or doors. If using the plastic film to seal windows, skip bedrooms to keep window exits clear in the event of a fire.
- Check your insulation.** Consider if you need to add to or replace your home's insulation. Good insulation reduces energy demand in both winter and summer.
- Insulate your hot water pipes** and/or install a water heater insulation blanket.



- **Use a humidifier** to keep your home humidity between 30 and 50%. You'll feel warmer with some humidity in the air.
- **The City offers a Gas Rebate Program** for replacement of old gas furnaces and water heaters with high efficiency gas furnaces and water heaters. Rebates are also offered for the purchase of new gas stoves, gas clothes dryers and gas fireplaces. Learn more at Waukee.org.

Find more tips for energy efficiency at Waukee.org.

Make Monthly Energy Bills More Predictable with Budget Billing

The Budget Billing program helps customers ease bill fluctuations, especially during the cold months. The free program stabilizes utility charges to a more predictable pattern rather than varying with seasonal energy usage patterns. If you have been a gas customer at your current address for at least one year, call 515-978-5502 to enroll.

Programs to Help

- New Opportunities offers assistance for those who cannot afford and/or physically perform winterization tasks. Call 515-465-5185 for more information.
- If you face financial hardship, call the Waukee Utility Billing Department at 515-978-5502 to ask about payment plans or assistance programs for utility bills.
- The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps qualifying low-income homeowners and renters pay for part of their primary heating costs for the winter. For more information, call 515-465-5185 to schedule an appointment with New Opportunities. See eligibility requirements at humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/liheap.
- Waukee Area Christian Services provides assistance with energy bills to those who qualify. Staff can be reached Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at 515-987-5523.

Holiday Recycling Do's & Don'ts

Put in the recycle bin:

- Plain cardboard boxes (flattened)
- Plain paper gift wrap, cards and envelopes (no foil, glitter, etc.),
- Glass jars (clean)

Put in the trash:

- Paper plates, plastic cups and silverware
- Aluminum foil or pans
- Styrofoam packaging or containers
- Plastic wrap or packaging material
- Fancy wrapping paper or cards (foil, glitter, etc.), tissue paper

Reminders

Never put plastic bags in your recycling bin. Plastic wrapping or bags can clog machinery at the recycling center. Instead, recycle clean plastic bags in designated bins at grocery or big box stores.

Before throwing out a battery, holiday lights or electronics, check the Recycling Guide at MWAtoday.com for steps to safely dispose of it.

