

NEWS

Vol. 16 No. 2 November 2003

Having difficulty paying utility bill?

If you're finding it difficult to keep up with your utility bill, please call us right away. We will work with you to set up a payment that works with your budget. Call **449.8092**.

United Way of the Midlands First Call for Help

Dial: 211 or 444.6666
7 a.m. - 7 p.m., daily

Weatherization program

Homeowners and tenants, who meet income guidelines, may sign up for a free inspection of their residence to identify the most effective energy improvements.

The program also will repair or replace faulty or non-working heating systems.

Homes are disqualified if they have leaky roofs, structural damage, pest infestation or are a health or safety risk.

If a household member receives Supplemental Security Income, Aid to Dependent Children or Energy Assistance payments from the Nebraska Health and Human Services, the household automatically qualifies for the project, regardless of income.

For more information, call the Douglas County Weatherization Trust, Inc., an agency of the Nebraska Energy Office, 342.1611. If you live in Sarpy Co., call 529.3513.

Wise use of energy

The cost of natural gas from suppliers varies from day to day because it is an unregulated commodity. Factors include: (weather) how cold temperatures are in the U.S.; (storage) how much gas utilities have in storage, and (demand) how much gas is used by residential and commercial customers across the U.S. The District passes the cost of natural gas from the supplier directly to you. Here are some tips to lower your utility bill.

1. Have your heating system and chimney inspected every year. Properly-operating appliances lower utility bills and help prevent carbon monoxide from escaping into your home.
2. Set your thermostat at 65 degrees in winter. You can lower it another five degrees or so at bedtime, or when you'll be away for any length of time. (*Note: Older adults may want to raise the thermostat to prevent hypothermia.*)
3. Clean or replace furnace filters once a month or as needed.
4. Replace an older furnace with a high-efficiency natural gas model. It can lower heating costs 30 percent or more.
5. Insulate, weather-strip and use storm windows and storm doors. Caulk around doors and windows.
6. Keep the fireplace damper closed unless a fire is going. An open damper is like having a 48-inch window wide open during the winter; it allows warm air to go right up the chimney.
7. Check ducts for air leaks. Look for sections that should be joined but have separated, and look for obvious holes. If you use duct tape to repair and seal your ducts, look for tape with Underwriters Laboratories (UL) logo to avoid tape that degrades, cracks and loses its bond with age.
8. Clean warm-air registers. Make sure they are not blocked by furniture, carpeting or drapes.
9. Keep drapes and shades on south-facing windows open during the day to allow sunlight to enter your home. Close them at night.

Call us at **554.6666** for a free copy of **"Energy Savers: Tips for Saving Energy and Money at Home."** The booklet also is available on the Internet (www.eren.doe.gov/consumerinfo/energy_savers).



1723 Harney St • Omaha NE 68102

website: www.mudomaha.com

e-mail: customer_service@mudnebr.com

Your Customer-Owned Utility

What's yours? What's ours?

Water

Main: Large pipe laid in or along a street. The main usually is four inches or more in diameter with a fire hydrant attached to it. We are responsible for water mains.

Corporation: A valve connecting the main to the water service line. We are responsible for corporations.

Service Line: Most customers have a water service—the line a home builder laid from your house to our main. If the main is across the street, the service may run under the street. You own and maintain the water service line.

Private Line: Some customers have a private water line, usually of small diameter, less than four inches. A private water line may parallel a street, a main or both. Sometimes a private line is shared by several customers. Like a water service line, the property owner or owners own and maintain private water lines.

Meter: Measures the amount of water used. You own the water meter. However, we maintain it, and must have access to the meter for readings and maintenance. We will replace it if it is defective.

Stop Box: Provides access to the curb stop or valve. Usually located between the back of the curb and property line. If the stop box is too high, it may be a hazard for anyone walking over it and should be lowered. You are responsible for maintenance of the stop box.

Repairs

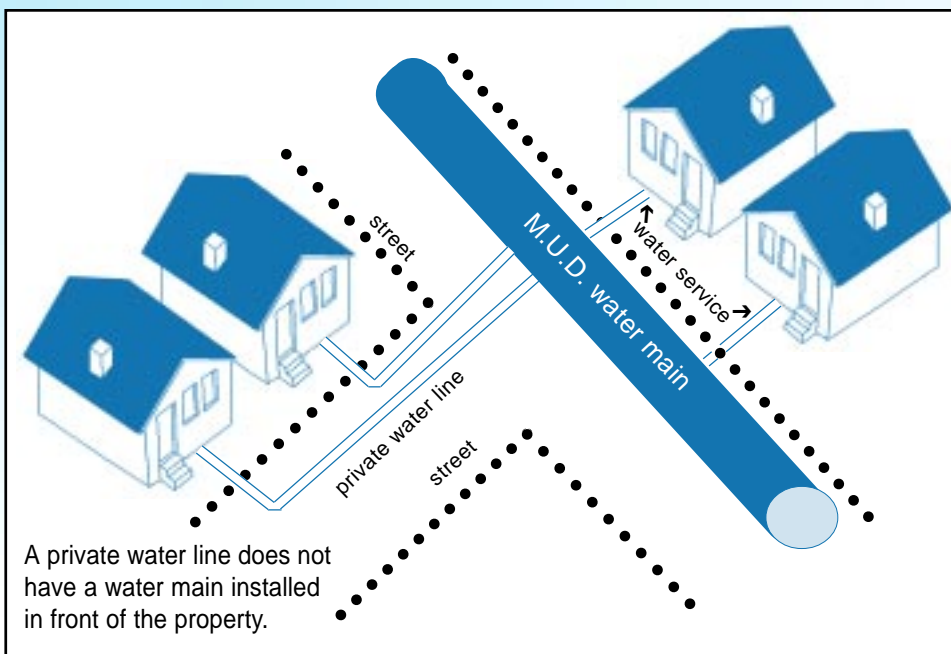
Mains: Buried water pipes can break or leak. We may find leaks on routine checks. However, if you are aware of a leak, call us at **554.6666**. When the leak is from a main, we repair it.

Service Lines: We issue notices for leaking or broken water services. Codes require that repairs be made by a master plumber, licensed by your city. You must get a permit from M.U.D. before any repair is done.

Your plumber determines if the water service can be repaired, or will advise you of options. You may call us to verify the type of repair needed. You are responsible for making sure repairs are made.

Water will be turned off when the leaking or broken service line causes damage, is a safety hazard, or if you fail to make arrangements for repair. The property owner is responsible for disconnect charges.

NOTE: Water service lines may not be relocated, repaired or modified without a permit from M.U.D. Any work must be inspected by the District.

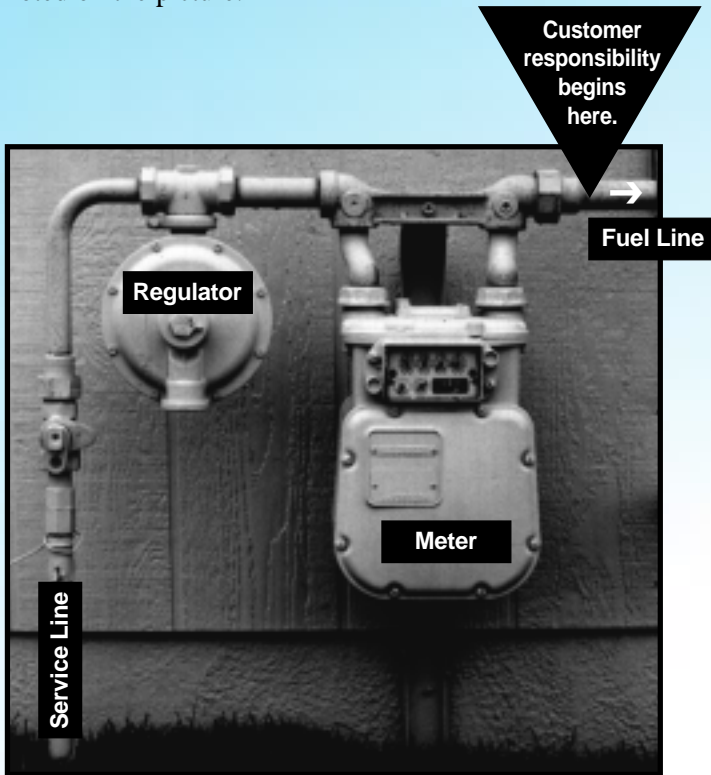


What's yours? What's ours?

Gas

Natural gas is delivered by an underground **service line**. The service line runs from the main in the street to the meter. M.U.D. is responsible for maintenance, repair and location of the service line, including the regulator and meter.

The customer is responsible for the **fuel line** on the “house side” of the meter. The fuel line begins after the meter as noted on the picture.



Buried natural gas fuel line after the meter

If the underground fuel line is not maintained, it may be subject to potential hazards of corrosion (rust) and leaks.

1. Inspect the buried fuel line periodically for leaks.
2. If the buried fuel line is metal, inspect it periodically for corrosion.
3. Repair any unsafe condition.

Contact a qualified plumber or heating contractor to provide location, inspection and repair services for buried lines.

M.U.D. does not repair or locate customer-owned fuel lines.

The **service line** will be located at no charge when you call the Diggers Hotline, **344.3565**. However, Diggers Hotline does not locate buried fuel lines after the meter.

When excavating near a buried **fuel line**, locate the line in advance and excavate by hand. Questions? Call us at **554.6666** or e-mail: customer_service@mudnebr.com.

Flex connectors

Flex connectors are corrugated metal tubing used to attach appliances to the natural gas line in your home or apartment.

Some connectors in homes or apartments more than 15 years old have manufacturer defects and may deteriorate over time, causing gas leaks, fire or explosions.

We notified our customer-owners about defective flex connectors in 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1997, 2001 and 2002. If the connector was checked, we have a record.

There is no need for concern if:

- You have not installed any gas appliances since the check.
- New connectors were used when new appliances were installed.

However, if a “used” connector was installed with a new appliance or if the flex connectors were not checked, one of our service technicians will check the connections free of charge.

Call 554.6666 to schedule an appointment. Do not move the appliance. You run the risk of damaging a safe connector or making a faulty one worse.

If a connection is faulty, we will replace it for \$46. You also may call a qualified heating contractor to replace the connector.

Receive a moisture sensor for Heat Aid donation

More than 4,600 customers donate to the Heat Aid Fund every month. Last year they helped 619 households of needy older and disabled neighbors pay heating bills with a total of \$161,527. As a thank-you, these donors will receive a moisture sensor which tells when potted plants or your lawn needs water.



To receive a moisture sensor, pledge \$2 or more dollars per month or make a one-time donation of \$10 or more. Contributions to the Fund are tax-deductible. To make a pledge, call **554.6666**, or mark the Heat Aid Fund box on the front of your bill statement.

The District established the Fund in 1983, and contracts with the Salvation Army to administer it.

Gift certificates

Looking for a gift for someone who has everything? Buy a M.U.D. gift certificate in any amount and for anyone who uses M.U.D. gas or water. You can even remain anonymous. The recipient's account will be credited for the amount of the certificate on the first bill after the holidays.

To buy a certificate, stop by our downtown office, 1723 Harney St., or send a check or money order to: M.U.D. Chief Cashier, 1723 Harney St., Omaha, NE 68102. Questions? Call **449.8118**.

Pets and shrubs

Pets, like dogs, generally are loyal and protect their turf. However, that loyalty can cause problems if your dog bites someone.

To help us better serve you, on the day your meter is scheduled to be read, please secure dogs away from your meter. Place their food and water away from the meter, too.

If your meter is accessible we will read it eight times a year and will send you the dates. Call **554.7782** to request a schedule. Outside of Omaha, **800.732.2270**.

Also, please remember to keep shrubs and bushes trimmed and away from gas and water meters. When planting, make sure meters are not covered with foliage and are accessible to our meter readers, especially when meters are in back yards and behind gates. Thank you.



(printed on recycled paper)

Gas, water emergencies

554.7777

Meter Reading Hotline

449.8161

Customer Service

554.6666

Meter tampering

Natural gas and water services are safe and reliable, however illegal tampering with pipes and meters can be hazardous and costly.

Tampering can lead to fires, explosions or water damage—endangering people and property.

If you know or suspect anyone of tampering with lines or meters, call 554.6666. You don't have to give your name. All information is confidential. Your tip could prevent injury or save a life.

Backflow prevention

In compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act, Nebraska Health and Human Services requires M.U.D. to make sure backflow preventers are installed and tested every year. We keep records of these tests and issue notices when testing is due.

This requirement does not apply to lawn sprinkler systems unless they use booster pumps or chemical injection systems. Also check your city's plumbing code for their regulations

Board meetings

9 A.M., November 5,
December 3, January 7

1723 Harney St., Omaha
For an agenda, call 449.8153, or see our website: www.mudomaha.com