News from your customer-owned utility

Vol. 18 No. 3 2005

Having difficulty paying bill?

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

Carbon monoxide

Your first line of defense to prevent carbon monoxide is an annual inspection of your heating system.

- If anyone is experiencing symptoms *(headache, dizziness, vomiting, nausea, weakness, tightness of chest)* of carbon monoxide or is overcome by CO, **call 911 immediately.** Do not panic. Get everyone out of the building.
- Open doors and windows to let in fresh air.
- Turn the thermostat and water heater to the lowest setting.
- Turn off all unvented appliances *(range, auxiliary heater).*
- Check flues for obstructions. Check for soot around the water heater and furnace.
- Check for a vehicle or small engine operating in an attached garage or basement.

If you are unable to determine the cause, call a licensed heating contractor or our emergency number, **554.7777.**

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.eere.energy.gov/consumerinfo/energy_savers).

metropolitan UTILITIES DISTRICT

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Gas vs. Electric Operating Costs (2005)

Appliance	Annual Gas Use (therms/yr.)	Monthly Operating Cost	Annual Operating Cost*
Gas Furnace			
(937 hours of operation per year)			
80% Efficient Models			
40,000 Btu/hr	375		$278.03
60,000 Btu/hr	563		$417.04
80,000 Btu/hr	750		$556.05
100,000 Btu/hr	938		$695.06
90% Efficient Models			
40,000 Btu/hr	333		$247.13
60,000 Btu/hr	500		$370.70
80,000 Btu/hr	667		$494.27
100,000 Btu/hr	833		$617.83
96% Efficient Models			
40,000 Btu/hr	313		$231.69
60,000 Btu/hr	469		$347.53
80,000 Btu/hr	625		$463.38
100,000 Btu/hr	781		$579.22
Water Heater			
(650 hours of operation per year)			
40-Gallon Models			
40,000 Btu/hr, 0.54 efficiency	260	$16.06	$192.76
40,000 Btu/hr, 0.59 efficiency	238	$14.70	$176.43
40,000 Btu/hr, 0.63 efficiency	223	$13.77	$165.23
Clothes Dryer			
(275 Hours of operation per year)			
5.7 cu. ft., 22,000 Btu/hr	61	$3.74	$44.85
7.3 cu. ft., 25,000 Btu/hr	69	$4.25	$50.97
Ranges, Ovens, Cooktops			
(126 hours of operation per year)			
4 burners, 9,500 BTU/hr/burner	50	$3.09	$37.07
Oven containing 2-15,000 Btu burners			
Gas Fireplace and Logs			
(200 hours of operation per year)			
30,000 Btu/hr	60		$44.48
40,000 Btu/hr	80		$59.31
60,000 Btu/hr	120		$88.97
72,000 Btu/hr	144		$106.76
90,000 Btu/hr	180		$133.45
Gas Lights			
(Operates 24 hours/day, 365 days/year)			
Dual mantle - 2,427 Btu/hr	210	$12.97	$155.69
Triple mantle - 3,451 Btu/hr	302	$18.66	$223.90
Quad mantle - 4,399 Btu/hr	385	$23.70	$285.44

For more information, call 554.7983

pliance	Annual Gas Use (therms/yr.)	Monthly Operating Cost	Annual Operating Cost**
tdoor Grill			
0 hours of operation per year)			
2-Burners: 25,000 Btu/hr	15	$0.93	$11.12
2-Burners: 32,000 Btu/hr	19	$1.19	$14.23
ool Heaters			
20 hours of operation per year)			
200,000 Btu/hr (0.88 efficiency)	240	$14.83	$177.94
300,000 Btu/hr (0.88 efficiency)	360	$22.24	$266.90
400,000 Btu/hr (0.88 efficiency)	480	$29.66	$355.87

Hours of operation are based on an average home in Omaha, NE.
* Costs are based on the average price of natural gas supplied by M.U.D. in 2004 = $0.7414 per therm

pace Heating Cost Comparison	Annual Operating Cost	Annual Savings (with 90% efficient furnace as base)	
Gas furnace (80% efficiency)	$556.05	$61.78	more expensive
Gas furnace (90% efficiency)	$494.27		
Gas furnace (96% efficiency)	$463.38	$30.89	less expensive
Electric furnace	$1,217.95	$723.68	more expensive
Heat pump (7.5 HSPF) w/ electric furnace backup	$535.68	$41.41	more expensive
Heat pump (7.5 HSPF) w/ 90% efficient backup furnace	$491.01	$3.26	less expensive

*Annual operating cost assumes an electric rate of 6.2 cents per kWh, a gas rate of $0.7414 per therm and an annual gas use of 750 therms for the baseline 80% efficient gas furnace.

ater Heating Cost Comparison	Annual Operating Cost	Annual Savings (with 0.59 efficiency water heater as base)	
Gas water heater (40,000 Btu/hr, 0.54 efficiency)	$192.76	$16.33	more expensive
Gas water heater (40,000 Btu/hr, 0.59 efficiency)	$176.43		
Gas water heater (40,000 Btu/hr, 0.63 efficiency)	$165.23	$11.20	less expensive
Electric water heater (5,000 watts, 0.90 efficiency)	$341.25	$164.82	more expensive

*Annual operating cost assumes an electric rate of 7 cents per kWh and a gas rate of $.7414 per therm. Annual use is 650 hours for a gas water heater and 975 hours for an electric water heater.

yer Cost Comparison	Annual Operating Cost	Annual Savings with gas dryer
Gas dryer (5.7 cu. ft., 22,000 Btu/hr)	$44.85	
Electric dryer (5.7 cu. ft, 5,000 watts)	$96.25	$51.40

*Annual operating cost assumes an electric rate of 7 cents per kWh and a gas rate of $.7414 per therm. Annual use is 275 hours.

anges, Ovens, Cooktops Comparison	Annual Operating Cost	Annual Savings with gas range
Gas range (free standing, 9,500 Btu/burner)	$37.07	
Electric range (free standing, 1,800 watts/burner)	$63.50	$26.43

*Annual operating cost assumes an electric rate of 7 cents per kWh and a gas rate of $.7414 per therm. Annual use is 126 hours.

Before you replace your heating system, think about...

- *Comfort level:* Conventional gas furnaces provide air from your registers at a range of 110 to 130 degrees. A standard electric heat pump provides air from registers in the range of 85 to 95 degrees.
- *Two heating systems:* A gas furnace will supply all your heating needs. An electric heat pump requires a back-up heating system.
- *Maintenance costs:* A gas furnace and air conditioner each operate four months per year, compared to an electric heat pump which will operate 12 months per year. Expect higher maintenance costs with a heat pump system.
- *Other:* Gas furnaces do not lose efficiency as outdoor air temperatures drop. Higher volumes of air typically are required with heat pumps. Existing duct systems are not designed to provide the higher air volumes.

If you're thinking about replacing your home's heating system, call us at 554.7983. We'll be happy to answer your questions and give you a gas and electric cost comparison.

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.

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.**

Gas, water emergencies
554.7777
Meter Reading Hotline
449.8161
Customer Service
554.6666

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., September 7,
October 5, November 2

1723 Harney St., Omaha
Call 449.8153 for an agenda

Looking for a speaker?

The M.U.D. Speakers Bureau offers entertaining and informative programs on water and natural gas issues, including Sniffasaurus or "Sniffy," our lovable dinosaur (live character). Sniffy teaches the importance of natural gas safety, and is perfect for fairs, exhibitions, class visits. (K-5th grade). *Visits to preschools and day care centers are not available.*

We also offer videos, traveling demonstrations and water plant tours to illustrate the importance of natural gas and water and the safe use of these resources.

All programs are presented at no charge. Reserve a program via our website (www.mudomaha.com) or

Call 449.8156

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