



Conservation Tips to Help Minimize Your Utility Cost during Uncertain Times

Religious leaders across Shelby County have suspended onsite services to help control the spread of COVID-19 in our community. MLGW knows this means your institution is facing unprecedented disruption, as employees prepare equipment to stream services online and you struggle to serve your congregation from afar. We encourage you to consider the following no- and low-cost recommendations to ensure that your congregation isn't spending money on energy and water waste.

LIGHTING

- Reduce lighting in entries, lobbies, vestibules and other spaces where natural light is available.
- Consider using task lighting (such as desk lamps) instead of overhead lighting, especially if overhead lighting is not zoned into smaller areas with separate light switches.
- Turn off non-essential lighting in worship areas, meeting spaces, bathrooms, hallways and storerooms when no one is present.
- Turn off all non-essential lighting when employees leave.
- If your lights are on a timer or other system automation, make sure you adjust both the operating hours and the coverage areas to account for limited occupancy.
- Adjust timers for exterior and parking lot lights, as available.
- Consider turning off your outdoor signage/lighting after hours. If it's on a timer, adjust the schedule as needed.

HEATING AND COOLING

- Check thermostat settings. MLGW recommends 68°F for heating and 78°F for cooling. If you have separate thermostats for your worship areas, meeting spaces and storeroom, adjust temperatures even further for those often-vacant areas.
- Post signs at each thermostat to encourage efficient settings.
- During warmer days, use portable fans in occupied spaces rather than cooling the entire area or building.
- Unplug space heaters, which use an enormous amount of electricity every time they are operated.
- Filters should be changed periodically—every one to six months, depending on the level of pollutants and dust in the indoor and outdoor air.
- Use window coverings to block intense sun and minimize overnight heat loss.
- Check and repair weatherstripping on exterior doors to ensure a tight seal when closed. Tiny gaps cause sizable energy waste, and create drafts that cause comfort issues.

WATER AND WATER HEATING

- Set your water heater(s) temperature no higher than 120-140°F (if you need to keep a supply of hot water for limited operations) or turning the water heater off (so it's not using

CONGREGATIONAL BUILDINGS

Congregations in the U.S. spend about \$1.00 per square foot annually on energy. Consumption averages 4.5 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity per square foot and 0.4 hundred cubic feet (CCF) of natural gas per square foot, annually. Although cooling and ventilation represent significant electrical loads in congregational buildings, miscellaneous plug loads—including amplified musical instruments, audiovisual equipment, and microphones—consume the most electricity in houses of worship. Space heating is the largest consumer of natural gas.

Learn more about how to minimize energy use in your facility by visiting: <https://mlgw.bizenergyadvisor.com> from your computer or smartphone.

Use **My Account** at www.mlgw.com to view bills, explore usage, create an Energy Action Plan (available for small-to mid-size accounts), report a power outage and request payment extensions. To register, you will need your MLGW bill.

energy to maintain a constant supply of hot water). When services resume, remember to adjust the thermostat back to 120-140°F. If the appliance was turned off, turn on the water heater(s) the day before you re-open.

- Count on rainy weather to handle irrigation some days; adjust the irrigation system's timer as well.
- Check faucets and toilets for leaks. Many leaks can be repaired by your maintenance staff (or a handy employee, after watching a YouTube video) using a few simple items from the hardware store. Hire a professional for more complicated repairs. Remember that sewer charges are based on water use and hot water leaks are extra costly due to the energy involved.

AUDIO-VIDEO SYSTEMS AND OTHER ELECTRONICS

- Turn off audio video equipment when not in use. Lights, cameras, projectors, amplifiers and sound systems collectively consume a significant amount of electricity.
- Turn off organs and other instruments when not in use.
- Turn off TVs, DVD players and radios. Consider unplugging any equipment that has a remote control, since the device is actually in "standby" mode and consuming electricity even when turned "off."
- Turn off computers, monitors, printers, copiers, fax machines and related equipment when not in use.
- Enable rigorous computer power-management settings on individual computers and monitors, forcing them to enter sleep mode after a specified period of inactivity. This ensures that any computers accidentally left on use minimal energy.
- Unplug chargers for cellphones and other portable devices. When plugged in, chargers use small amounts of electricity even if they are no longer actively charging.

KITCHEN AND BREAKROOM

- Brew coffee and then store the excess in insulated cups or carafes, rather than using the coffee maker's burner.
- Control the use of food service equipment to match your new operations. If you are preparing more food than usual, expect to see higher utility costs so look for opportunities to minimize idle time for ovens, ranges and fryers. If you are preparing less food than usual, turn off as much equipment as you can and adjust the settings for other equipment. (If your facility includes a commercial kitchen, read MLGW's conservation tips for food service for more specifics.)
- Unplug the microwave to turn off the digital clock, if no one will be present.
- Unplug non-refrigerated vending machines when employees leave, or turn off 24/7 if no one is using. Check with your supplier about timers and other automation options for refrigerated models. Consider disconnecting the lighting ballast that illuminates advertising on beverage vending machines. The lights cost money to operate and add heat to the refrigerated compartment.
- Adjust water cooler and ice machine settings to reflect your new work schedule.

STAFF AND CONGREGATION INVOLVEMENT

- Remind your staff how important it is to control utility and other costs, especially now. Consider posting utility bills so staff and volunteers who comprise your building committee can see the actual usage and costs.
- Develop simple energy-management procedures—with checklists—and assign responsibility for adjusting thermostats and turning off lights, computers and other equipment. Continue to use the checklists after this crisis has passed.
- Label all panels and switches so occupants know what to turn off when leaving the area.
- Use the Explore Usage tools in My Account at www.mlgw.com and Business Energy Advisor at <https://mlgw.bizenergyadvisor.com> to find more facility-specific ways for your institution to save.
- Remind staff and members that they can access My Account at www.mlgw.com to view their bills, explore usage, create an Energy Action Plan, request an extension and handle other MLGW business as needed.

Disconnections for Non-Payment

MLGW has suspended non-payment disconnections for all customers during this community crisis. Your business will still be billed but, should you be unable to pay your bill in full, MLGW will not disconnect electricity, gas or water services. Customers are encouraged to make payments online through My Account at www.mlgw.com, via mail, or by drop box or drive-through window at MLGW Community Offices. Remember that steps you take today to reduce your utility consumption will help minimize any balance owed once MLGW returns to normal operation. Contact MLGW's Business Solutions Center at 901-528-4270 or MLGWbsc@mlgw.org (Monday-Friday, 8:00am-4:30am CST) if you need to discuss options.

US Small Business Administration Economic Injury Disaster Loans Available

Tennessee small businesses and nonprofit organizations that have suffered economic injury as a result of COVID-19 can apply for Economic Injury Disaster Loans of up to \$2 million per applicant to help meet financial obligations and operating expenses which could have otherwise been met. Interest rates for the loans are 3.75% for small businesses and 2.75% for nonprofit organizations. The loans can be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable or other bills that can't be paid due to the disaster's impact. The Economic Injury Disaster Loans are administered and processed through the SBA. Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information and download applications at www.sba.gov/disaster. Applicants may also call SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov. Terms are determined on a case-by-case basis.

COVID-19: It's not business as usual, but we're all in this together!