



Conservation Tips to Help Minimize Your Utility Cost during Uncertain Times

Schools across Shelby County have been closed temporarily to help control the spread of COVID-19 in our community. MLGW knows this means your organization is facing unprecedented disruption as you struggle with ongoing expenses, deep cleaning and educational needs, while worrying about the impact on students, faculty and staff. We encourage you to consider the following no- and low-cost recommendations to ensure that your school isn't spending money on energy and water waste.

LIGHTING

- Turn off non-essential lighting in classrooms, storerooms, office spaces, break rooms, bathrooms, hallways and other spaces.
- Consider installing compact fluorescent or LED bulbs in areas that will remain lit 24/7.
- If your lights are on a timer or other system automation, make sure you adjust accordingly.
- Exterior and parking lot lights often run on photocells or timers. Adjust as available.
- Consider turning off your outdoor signage.

HEATING AND COOLING

- Check thermostat settings. MLGW recommends 68°F for heating and 78°F for cooling, when spaces are occupied. Since your building is closed, consider lowering the heating setting (or raising the cooling setting) several degrees more to limit system operation further.
- Filters should be changed periodically—every one to six months, depending on level of pollutants and dust in the air.
- Check exterior doors and windows to make sure they seal tightly. Tiny gaps cause sizable energy waste. Since building maintenance is considered an “essential service,” make a list of items to have repaired while your school is closed.

WATER AND WATER HEATING

- Consider lowering the water heater temperature to 100-120°F (if you need to keep a supply of hot water for maintenance staff) or turning the water heater off (so it's not using energy to maintain a constant supply of hot water). When school resumes, remember to adjust the thermostat back to 120-140°F. If the appliance was turned off, turn on the water heater the day before you re-open.
- Count on rainy weather to handle irrigation some days; adjust the irrigation system's timer as well.
- Report leaky faucets and toilets to the maintenance staff. Remember that sewer charges are based on water use and hot water leaks are extra costly due to the energy involved.

K-12 SCHOOLS

Kindergarten through high school (K–12) buildings in the U.S. use an average of 10 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity and 0.5 hundred cubic feet (CCF) of natural gas per square foot, annually.

In a typical school building, space heating, cooling, and lighting together account for nearly 70% of school energy use. Plug loads—such as computers and copiers—constitute one of the top three electricity end uses, after lighting and cooling.

Although energy costs account for only 2% to 4% of school district expenditures, it is one of the few expenses that can be decreased without negatively affecting classroom instruction.

Learn more about how to minimize energy use in your school 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, report a power outage and request payment extensions. To register, you will need your MLGW bill.

COMPUTERS AND ELECTRONICS

- Turn off non-essential computers, monitors, printers, copiers, fax machines, intercom systems and related equipment. Use a power strip for devices in close proximity so you can turn off all at once.
- Turn off any electronic displays.
- Unplug chargers for cellphones, laptops and other portable devices. When plugged in, chargers use small amounts of electricity even if they are not actively charging.
- 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.”

BREAK ROOM AND LUNCHROOM

- Unplug the microwave to turn off the digital clock since no one will be present.
- Unplug non-refrigerated vending machines. Check with your supplier about options for refrigerated models. Disconnect the ballast for advertising lights on beverage vending machines, as lighting costs money and adds heat to the refrigerated compartment.
- Change settings for water coolers and ice machines.
- Consider unplugging the refrigerator. Discard any food items and give it a good cleaning as well. Turn on again the day before school resumes operation.
- If your school has a commercial kitchen, make sure cooking equipment is turned off and refrigeration equipment is adjusted accordingly. (Check MLGW’s conservation tips for food industry for specifics.)

EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT

- Remind your staff how important it is to control utility and other costs, especially now.
- Plan to continue energy savings when your business reopens. Develop simple energy-management procedures—with checklists—and assign responsibility between shifts and at the end of the day 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 school to save.
- Remind employees 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.

MLGW Disconnections for Non-Payment

MLGW has suspended non-payment disconnections for all customers during this community crisis. Your school 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.