



## Conservation Tips to Help Minimize Your Utility Cost during Uncertain Times

The food service industry has been hit hard by necessary actions to help control the spread of COVID-19 in Memphis and Shelby County. MLGW knows this means your business is facing unprecedented loss in sales and anxiety about your livelihood and employees' lost wages. We encourage you to consider the following recommendations to ensure that your facility isn't spending its limited revenue on energy and water waste.

### COOKING

- With reduced orders, you are already using your cooktops and ovens less, but consider whether there are additional opportunities to minimize equipment use.
- Turn off backup burners, ovens and fryers that may be idle due to fewer orders.
- Turn off exhaust fans when not needed.

### WATER AND WATER HEATING

- Make sure your water heater temperature is set no higher than 140°F.
- Set your dishwasher rinse pressure to 15 to 25 pounds per square inch (100 to 172 kilopascals) to avoid excess water use, set the wash-tank temperature to 160°F and set the booster heater to 180°F.
- Turn off high-temperature dishwashers at night so that built-in burners or heating elements will not consume energy. If the booster heater has a separate manual switch, make sure it's turned off too.
- Check faucets and toilets for leaks. Many leaks can be repaired by a handy employee watching a YouTube video, using a few inexpensive items from the hardware store. Remember that sewer charges are based on water use and hot water leaks are extra costly due to the energy involved.
- For irrigation systems, adjust the timer to minimize use. Count on rainy weather to handle irrigation on many days.

### REFRIGERATION

- With reduced orders, your employees are accessing refrigerators, freezers and coolers less often, automatically saving energy.
- Make sure automatic door closers are working properly and that manual doors are closed tightly.
- Turn off interior lights in walk-in units between uses and at closing time.
- Turn off the defoggers/heaters that keep condensation off glass doors on reach-in refrigerators, especially if located in employee-only areas.

## FOOD SERVICE INDUSTRY

Restaurants in the U.S. have one of the greatest energy intensities of any type of commercial building—an average of 38 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity and 1.1 hundred cubic feet (CCF) of natural gas annually, per square foot. **Quick-service restaurants** have even higher usage, consuming an average of 81 kWh of electricity and 1.7 CCF of natural gas per square foot annually. Many no- or low-cost opportunities for saving energy can be found in the end-use areas that consume the most energy. Achieving just a 20% reduction in energy costs will translate directly into an additional 1% in profit.

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

Use **My Account** at [www.mlgw.com](http://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.

## HEATING AND COOLING

- Check thermostat settings. MLGW recommends 68°F for heating and 78°F for cooling. If you have separate thermostats for your dining areas, adjust temperatures even further for those empty spaces.
- Check your furnace filter and replace if dirty. Filters should be changed monthly for best results as clogged filters cause the system to operate longer, increasing utility costs and impacting system life.

## LIGHTING

- In spaces where natural lighting is available, dim lights in proportion to the availability of sunlight.
- Turn off non-essential lighting in dining rooms, bathrooms, game areas, hallways and storerooms.
- Install compact fluorescent or LED bulbs in high-traffic areas that will remain lit during operating hours and especially for any lights that burn 24/7.
- 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.
- Turn off your “open” sign at closing time.
- Consider turning off your outdoor signage after hours. If it’s on a timer, adjust the schedule as needed.

## ELECTRONICS

- Turn off computers, printers, fax machines and related office equipment when not in use.
- Turn off your cash register and ancillary equipment at closing time.
- Turn off or unplug video games, televisions and non-refrigerated vending machines at closing time; consider leaving off 24/7 since diners are not present.

## EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT

- Rally your staff and discuss how important it is to control utility and other costs, especially now.
- Develop simple energy-management procedures—with checklists—and assign responsibility between shifts and at the end of the day for turning off dishwashers, exhaust fans, lights, computers and other equipment. Continue to use the checklists after this crisis has passed.
- Use the Explore Usage tools in My Account at [www.mlgw.com](http://www.mlgw.com) and Business Energy Advisor at <https://mlgw.bizenergyadvisor.com> to find more facility-specific ways for your business to save.
- Remind employees they can access My Account at [www.mlgw.com](http://www.mlgw.com) to find ways to save energy and water at their homes, pay bills electronically 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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.sba.gov/disaster). Applicants may also call SBA’s Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov). Terms are determined on a case-by-case basis.