



Conservation Tips to Help Minimize Your Utility Cost during Uncertain Times

Many offices across Shelby County have been closed to help control the spread of COVID-19 in our community. MLGW knows this means your business is facing unprecedented disruption, as employees work from home and you struggle to maintain morale while providing client services. We encourage you to consider the following no- and low-cost recommendations to ensure that your business isn't spending revenue on energy and water waste.

LIGHTING

- Turn off non-essential lighting in offices, meeting spaces, bathrooms, hallways and storerooms.
- Consider installing 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.
- Exterior and parking lot lights often run on photocells or timers. Adjust as available.
- Consider turning off your outdoor signage after hours.

HEATING AND COOLING

- Adjust thermostat settings. MLGW recommends 68°F for heating and 78°F for cooling when spaces are occupied, so adjust lower or higher as needed.
- 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.
- Report exterior doors that don't seal well to maintenance staff. Tiny gaps cause sizable energy waste and can be repaired while your office is closed.

WATER AND WATER HEATING

- Set your water heater temperature to 100-120°F or turn off entirely. Remember to restore to a normal temperature—no higher than 120-140°F—the day before offices reopen.
- Count on rainy weather to handle irrigation some days; adjust the irrigation system's timer as well.
- Report leaky faucets and toilets to the building manager, fix them yourself or hire a professional. Remember that sewer charges are based on water use and hot water leaks are extra costly due to the energy involved.

COMPUTERS AND ELECTRONICS

- Turn off computers, monitors, printers, copiers, fax machines and other equipment.

OFFICES AND OFFICE BUILDINGS: CLOSED

Office buildings in the U.S. use an average of 15 to 20 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity and 0.24 to 0.38 hundred cubic feet (CCF) of natural gas per square foot annually. In a typical office building, lighting, heating, and cooling represent nearly 70% of total energy use, so these systems offer the best opportunities for energy savings. Energy represents about 19% of total expenditures for the typical office building, making it a significant operational cost deserving of management attention—whether you lease space, manage or own the building.

Learn more about how to minimize energy use in your office 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.

- Turn off any public address (PA) or intercom system.
- Unplug chargers for cellphones, laptops and other portable devices. When plugged in, chargers use small amounts of electricity even if they are no longer 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

- Unplug the microwave to turn off the digital clock.
- Unplug non-refrigerated vending machines. Check with your supplier about timers and other automation options for refrigerated models.
- Disconnect the ballast for advertising lights on beverage vending machines, as they cost money to run and add heat to the refrigerated compartment.
- Turn off the water cooler.
- Unplug the break room refrigerator. Discard food and clean thoroughly. Remember to plug in the day before your office resumes normal operations.
- If your office has a commercial kitchen, read MLGW’s conservation tips for the food service industry.

EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT

- Remind your staff (or tenants) 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 adjusting thermostats and turning off lights, computers and other equipment. Continue to use the checklists after this crisis has passed.
- Label all switches and panels so staff knows what to operate.
- 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 business 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 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 Small Business Administration (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.