



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

Retailers across Shelby County that are considered “essential businesses” are operating as normal or with reduced hours to help control the spread of COVID-19 in our community. MLGW knows this means your business is facing unprecedented disruption as you struggle to keep inventory stocked and serve anxious customers, while worrying about the health of your team members. 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

- In spaces where natural lighting is available, dim lights in proportion to the availability of sunlight.
- Turn off non-essential lighting in storerooms, office spaces, bathrooms and hallways.
- Consider desk lamps rather than overhead lighting in offices.
- Turn off all non-essential lighting at the close of business.
- 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 the operating hours to account for business changes.
- 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

- Check thermostat settings. MLGW recommends 68°F for heating and 78°F for cooling, while spaces are occupied. If you have separate thermostats for offices and storerooms, adjust temperatures even further for those often-vacant areas.
- On mild Spring days, consider using portable fans rather than the air conditioner in appropriate areas.
- Report exterior doors that don’t seal well to the maintenance staff or building manager. Tiny gaps cause sizable energy waste.

### WATER AND WATER HEATING

- Set your water heater temperature to 120-140°F.
- 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 (after watching a YouTube video) using a few basic items from the hardware store, 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

- Consider shutting down electronic displays at the close of business, using a timer or manually.

## RETAIL GOODS & SERVICES FACILITIES: OPEN

Retail buildings in the U.S. use an average of 18.3 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity per square foot and 0.33 hundred cubic feet (CCF) of natural gas per square foot, annually.

In a typical U.S. retail building, lighting, cooling, and heating represent about 60% of total use, which makes these systems the best targets for energy savings. Lighting represents the largest electricity use, while space heating represents the largest use of natural gas.

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

- Turn off your cash register and ancillary equipment at closing time.
- Turn off computers, monitors, printers, copiers, fax machines and related equipment at closing time. Use a power strip for devices in close proximity so you can turn off everything at once.
- Turn off the intercom system at closing time.
- Unplug chargers for cellphones, cordless phones, laptops, tablets 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

- Brew coffee and store the excess in an insulated cup or carafe, rather than keeping the burner on.
- Unplug non-refrigerated vending machines at close of business. Check with your supplier about timers and other automation options for refrigerated models. Consider disconnecting the ballast for advertising lights on beverage vending machines, as lighting costs money and adds heat to the refrigerated compartment.
- Adjust water cooler and ice machine settings to reflect your new business hours.
- If your facility has commercial kitchen equipment, read MLGW’s conservation tips for food industry.

#### EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT

- Remind your staff 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 know what should be turned off at close of business.
- 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 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](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.