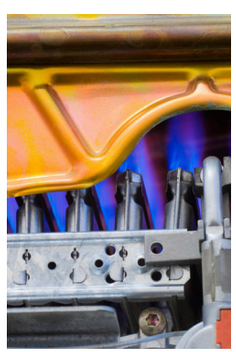
- Keep curtains and blinds closed at night and on cloudy days. Open curtains on sunny days to let warmth in.
- Install a “set-back” programmable thermostat that will automatically adjust temperatures throughout the day.
- Keep central heating air filters clean.
- When using the fireplace, turn heat down or off, and remember to close the damper after each use to eliminate heat loss after making sure all embers are out.
- Dress warmly in layers to retain body heat.
- Elderly people should set thermostats no lower than 68 degrees, dress warmly and drink plenty of liquids to avoid hypothermia. Remember to check on elderly relatives and neighbors frequently to monitor their health and safety.

## Gas Safety

Correct operation of natural gas appliances is important for safety and to maintain efficiency. The most important point to remember is that your gas appliances should always burn a steady blue flame. Follow these tips to safely operate gas appliances:



- Keep paper, curtains and other flammable materials away from gas appliances.
- Have gas appliances professionally installed to ensure proper installation.
- Do not turn on or try to light gas appliances unless you know the correct procedure.
- MLGW will send a service representative to your home to light your pilot and give your heating system a safety check. For an appointment, call 820-7878.

## If you smell a strong gas odor in your home, follow these safety steps:

- Do not light matches or operate electrical equipment including telephone and light switches.
- Evacuate the home or building.
- Call MLGW’s emergency number, 528-4465, from a neighboring home or building to report the gas leak.

## Weatherization

If your home is poorly weatherized, warm air is constantly escaping as your utility bill rises. Blocking the cold winter air out of your home, and keeping the heat in, is easy with basic weatherization measures.

- Apply good quality caulk around windows and doors.
- Install storm windows or 6-mil polyethylene plastic over windows to block out the cold.
- Add attic insulation to a level of R-30.
- Seal drafty spaces behind light switches and outlet plates with foam gaskets. (Be sure to cut off electricity before installing.)
- Install a threshold and weatherstripping on exterior doors if you can see light around a closed door.
- Wrap R-7 insulation around heating ducts in attics and other unheated spaces. Seal duct joints with heat-resistant furnace tape.
- Install an airtight door around the fireplace to prevent drafts as fires burn down, and remember to close the damper after each fire.
- If you don’t use your fireplace, install a plywood cover over the front to prevent heat loss.
- Make sure attic vents are clear of obstructions in order to prevent moisture build-up in the attic.
- Remove window-unit air conditioners and seal cracks with duct tape to prevent drafts.
- Close all foundation vents except one to supply fresh air to the floor furnace.

## Want more energy tips?

For recommendations on improving your home’s energy efficiency, call The Energy Doctor at 528-4188. Request an MLGW Energy Rx site visit or Home Check-up survey by going to mlgw.com.

MLGW

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Memphis Light, Gas and Water Division

# Winter Watch

MLGW

**When the winter chill sets in, most people are tempted to turn up the heat to stay warm. Since heating can account for up to 40 percent of your utility costs, that temptation can have a big impact on your wallet.**

**MLGW has developed these Winter Watch tips to help you and your family enjoy the season in a safe and warm, yet energy-efficient, manner.**

## Frozen Pipes

Your water pipes are in danger of freezing anytime the temperature or wind chill approaches 20 degrees Fahrenheit. However, with a few simple precautions, you can avoid frozen or burst pipes and costly repairs.

- Insulate outside pipes and pipes in attics, utility rooms and other unheated areas.
- Turn indoor faucets on to a slow drip and open cabinet doors to let warm air circulate near the pipes.

- If pipes are located in the attic, prop open the access door approximately one inch to allow some heat to enter the area.
- In extremely cold weather, do not lower the thermostat or turn the heating system off to save money.
- If pipes freeze, turn off the water to the house and open all indoor faucets. (The shut-off valve may be located outside where the water line enters the house, inside a closet or under a sink. Know where to find yours in an emergency.)
- If pipes burst, turn off water to the house and call MLGW's emergency number, 528-4465.

## Space Heaters

Electric space heaters are a good source of supplemental heat, yet they can be dangerous, if used carelessly.

- To provide adequate air supply and avoid fire hazards, position portable electric heaters away from furniture, curtains and other items.

- Never leave heaters unattended in a room with small children.
- Do not use space heaters overnight while everyone is asleep.
- Place space heaters on the floor for maximum efficiency and stability.
- Run the electric cord behind furniture or at the edge of the room to prevent tripping.
- Do not cover heater or place items on top of the unit.
- Never pull on the cord to unplug unit; instead, grasp the plug itself to remove it from the outlet.
- Before initial use, vacuum over the grill to remove dust and dirt from space heaters.
- If space heater is dropped or knocked over, check for damage before using it again.
- Do not use space heaters outdoors or in wet areas where moisture could cause electrical problems or even electrocution.

Gas room heaters are similar to portable electric heaters except that they require permanent ventilation through the roof or exterior wall. Follow these additional tips for safe use:

- Units should be installed only by qualified individuals.
- Have the venting system inspected annually before the heating season begins.
- The gas flame should burn steady and blue. A yellow or wavering flame, gas smell or overheating are signs of inadequate air supply.
- Keep combustibles away from gas room heaters.

## Carbon Monoxide

Natural gas appliances are safe, cost-effective ways to heat your home and water, cook food and perform other tasks. However, improper operation can result in a build-up of carbon monoxide, a potentially lethal, odorless gas caused by clogged burners, inadequate air combustion, improper venting and other problems.

Check your gas appliances for these signs of improper operation:

- yellow gas flame
- floating or wavering flame
- soot
- overheating

If any of these conditions exist, call MLGW's emergency number, 528-4465.

Be aware of signs of carbon monoxide poisoning, which can cause flu-like symptons. These symptoms include: headache, fatigue, dizziness, nausea, vomiting and inability to think clearly. If these symptoms exist, leave the premises. Call MLGW's emergency number, 528-4465, from a neighbor's house to report a gas leak and consult your doctor immediately.

There are several brands of carbon monoxide detectors on the market today which can sense the presence of carbon monoxide before levels become severe. However, it is better to avoid problems by having all gas appliances professionally inspected each year. If you choose to install a carbon monoxide detector, in addition to annual maintenance, install one which has been approved by the Underwriters Laboratory (UL). Follow installation instructions exactly to select a proper location for the unit.

## Thermostat Temperatures

Heating is the single largest component of your utility bill. Instead of turning up the thermostat, follow these tips to stay warm this winter:

- Set the thermostat at 68 degrees when you and your family are home. Each degree above 68 adds as much as four percent to your utility bill.

- At bedtime, consider lowering the temperature and adding extra blankets to the bed. Socks and a cap will also help you retain heat as you sleep.
- If you will be away from home for more then four hours, lower the thermostat or turn the heating system off – unless there is danger of freezing your pipes.
- Make sure delivery and return vents are open in the rooms you use. Close vents and doors to unused rooms.
- In a multi-story home, open vents on the lower floor and partially close vents on upper stories.