

Gas pipelines: Keep your family safe

Besides being prepared for the dangers of severe weather, some knowledge about natural gas safety is critical. It is important to know how to be prepared and keep your family safe in the event of natural gas pipeline problems.

Be aware of where natural gas transmission pipelines are located in your area. Pipeline markers are yellow.

If your home is close to a major gas-supply pipeline, you should know what to do and where to go in case of a pipeline emergency.

When warned to evacuate the area, do so immediately, especially if you smell a strong gas odor. Don't use anything electrical, especially light switches, flashlights, cell phones or landlines.

Almost 60 percent of natural gas pipeline accidents are caused by damage from excavation or construction. Other causes include damage by vehicles or corrosion. Whenever you plan to

dig on your property, check to see where your home's underground gas lines are located, even for spring planting.

Call 811 before digging to have your underground gas (and electrical) supply lines located and marked. Failure to do so could result in an explosion (or electrocution). Plus, it's the law.

Simply call 811 at least three days before you plan to dig to arrange for a representative to come out and mark the location of your underground pipes and cables. Don't dig until they have done so.

For gas appliance safety, make sure your gas appliances and furnace are properly vented and inspected annually by a licensed professional.

For more info on natural gas safety, visit mlgw.com/about/brochures.

The judges have spoken!

The winners of MLGW's 2020 "Power Bytes" Poster Art Contest have been announced. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and children being physically absent from the schools, with the cooperation of Shelby County Schools and the Children's Museum of Memphis, MLGW received 105 art submissions (50 percent less than the previous year) from schools within Shelby County, in four defined categories: Kindergarten-2nd Grade, 3rd-5th Grade, 6th-8th Grade and 9th-12th Grade.

"It wasn't easy to choose the winners due to the great quality and inspiration that the students showed in their work," said one of the judges. The judging was based on creativity, originality, and adherence to the contest rules.

The winners of MLGW's 2020 "Power Bytes" Poster Art Contest are: K-2 category winning student: Kaiden Stricklen, 1st Grade; Teacher: Ms. Johnson; School: Holmes Road Elementary. 3-5 category winning student: Libby Baird, 5th Grade; Teacher: Audrey Engstrand; School: Lakeland Middle Prep. 6-8 category winning student: Alijah D. Wilson, 8th Grade; Teacher: Shon Wilson; School: Home-schooled. 9-12 category winning student: Ashley Merriweather, 10th Grade; Teacher: Judy Holmes; School: City University School.



MLGW in the Community: Due to coronavirus (COVID-19) precautions, many community events have been postponed or canceled. Due to Shelby County's Safer at Home orders and social distancing measures, our MLGW in the Community section will be in hiatus until events resume.

Please note: We encourage customers to use MLGW's My Account as a safe option as our community offices are closed to walk-in customers. Signing up is easy. Go to mlgw.com or download our app.



Community Outreach is produced by MLGW's Corporate Communications department. If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions about Community Outreach, please call (901) 528-4820 or (901) 528-4557.

Corporate Communications, Memphis Light, Gas and Water Division
P.O. Box 430, Memphis, TN 38101-0430

Community OUTREACH

News to the Neighborhoods from Memphis Light, Gas and Water Division

March/April 2021

Community Outreach is now only available electronically

Community Outreach is now only available online or by email. You can visit mlgw.com/communityoutreach to read or print this and future issues, or receive an email link of the publication by request at: commrelations@mlgw.org.

MLGW celebrates 82 years

Your utility company, Memphis Light, Gas and Water Division, turns 82 on March 9, 2021.

For 82 years, the Division has brought affordable and reliable electric, gas and water services to the population of Memphis and Shelby County. In 1939, the city of Memphis bought then privately-owned Memphis Power and Light and formed what has evolved into the largest three-service public utility in the nation. Visit mlgw.com to learn more about our history.

State of MLGW: Want to know MLGW's 2020 accomplishments and the priorities for 2021? Review the State of MLGW at mlgw.com/ServiceImprovementPlan.

Mission (Why we exist)

To safely deliver services that create and sustain superior customer experiences.

Vision (Where we're headed)

To be the trusted provider of exceptional customer value in the communities we are privileged to serve.

Be prepared: Spring usually brings along severe weather

Though the deadly storms hit unusually in February, the spring severe-weather season is only just beginning. It makes sense to acquaint you, your family and friends with a few severe weather tips and pointers as the season begins in earnest. Below are a few things your family can do to prepare before storms and severe weather hit:

- Develop a **Family Preparedness Plan** that includes a safe, protected place to take cover whether at home, school, work, outdoors or in a car when a severe weather warning is issued. Update the plans every school year, and as places of employment and residence change.
- Assemble a **Family Emergency Supply Kit** that includes items such as a First Aid Kit and essential medication; canned food and can opener; at least three gallons of water per person; a battery-powered radio, flashlight and extra batteries; personal hygiene items; tools; and important family documents (wills, insurance policies, social security cards, bank account numbers, etc.) in a waterproof, portable container.
- Learn where your gas and water shutoff valves and main electric service panel are located, and how to turn them off in an emergency. After a severe storm, it is possible for components

of your utility services to become damaged, resulting in a safety hazard. To ensure your safety after the storm, keep the following tips in mind:

- Do not touch or come close to downed power lines. Although they may appear harmless, they could be energized, and therefore, deadly. Keep people and animals away from downed lines and call MLGW immediately at 528-4465.
- If a power line falls on your car, do not get out. Use your cell phone to call MLGW immediately or get the attention of someone who can call for you. Stay inside the car until professionals have moved the power line.
- If you smell a strong gas odor in your home, do not smoke, use candles, matches or other open flames, and don't operate any electrical equipment, including light switches. The slightest spark could cause an explosion. Proper emergency planning can greatly improve your comfort and ability to cope in distressed situations, and we urge you to develop a disaster preparedness and response plan for the protection of your family. More useful severe weather information can be found in "Weathering Nature's Fury," a publication accessible on MLGW's website at mlgw.com/StormPrep.pdf.

Scammers target MLGW customers

Memphis Light, Gas and Water Division asks customers to be on alert for scam callers threatening to disconnect service unless immediate payment is made. A technology called “spoofing” makes it look like calls are coming from MLGW, but they are not. Customers who receive these types of calls are urged to hang up on the criminal.

While MLGW mails cut-off notices to customers and uses auto-dialers alerting them that payment must be made by a certain date to avoid cutoff, we will never ask customers to call a 1-800 number or buy a prepaid debit card.

If you get such a call, you are urged to do the following:

- Hang up the phone.
- Never give out personal financial information over the phone.
- Residential customers should call 901-544-6549 and business customers should call MLGW’s Commercial Resource Center at 901-528-4270 if they have concerns.
- Report it to your local police station if you have been scammed.
- Check your account balance in My Account online.



MLGW reaches out to the homeless with care packages

It was 32 degrees outside when six volunteers with MLGW arrived recently at the Hospitality Hub for the homeless. For the next three hours, they gave out 100 backpacks filled with snacks, scarves, gloves, socks, emergency blankets and bottles of water.

There was “Miss Cheryl” who has been homeless for about a year. When she can, she stays at the Church of Christ shelter for women. “That’s my favorite,” she said. She did not want her last name used.

Nearby, Andrew Bankhead is one of newly homeless. He’s 37 and lost his job early on during the pandemic. He’s selling his plasma to survive after losing his house in November.

“I tried going to the Memphis Housing Authority. There’s about 4,000 people ahead of me and a four- to seven-year wait. I have some unemployment pending. I’ve just got to toughen it out and stay positive,” Bankhead said.

Melissa Johnson has been homeless for three and half years and sleeps in her 1999 Chrysler Sebring that needs a new axle and ball joints. “It’s just a struggle,” she admitted. “You take it one day at a time. I’m hoping and praying I can get some assistance so I can get heat on in my car.”

All three were grateful for the help that the volunteers provided.

The experience proved to be eye opening for the volunteers. “It makes you realize at any given moment, that it could be any of us,” said Rose Herron a credit counselor with the Millington Community Office. “One day, I hope their situation changes.”



(L to R) Rose Herron, Millington Community office; Tiffany Spearman, Downtown Community office; Yashica Perry, Whitehaven Community office and Michael Taylor, Strategic Planning and Innovation.

Kelsey Johnson, executive director of the Hospitality Hub that serves the homeless, called this year horrible: “Most who would be feeding people have stopped. The homeless are suffering. Men can’t get into the shelters without a negative Covid-19 test. The biggest women’s shelter just shut down because of Covid.”

For those who want to help, Johnson said, “Right now, you can’t volunteer. If your church has outreach, be involved. If your church doesn’t have it, you’re at the wrong church.” He suggested any number of agencies need financial help now. “Be intentional,” he said. “Pick one and give.”

Utility assistance available

Shelby County Community Services Agency’s Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) has funds available for utility assistance. If you received assistance prior to October 1, 2020, you are encouraged to apply! To see if you qualify, call 901-222-4200.

Are you or someone you know homeless or looking to move but can’t obtain new utility services because of an old or delinquent utility account? If so, Shelby County Community Services Agency has funds available to assist with your delinquent account. Call 901-222-4232 to see if you qualify.

April is National Safe Digging Month: Call before you dig

With the start of nicer spring weather, you are probably planning a home improvement project, tree planting, or installation of a fence or deck, which requires digging. Well, whether you are planning a do-it-yourself project or hiring a professional, smart digging means calling 811 before each job. Homeowners often make risky assumptions about whether they should get their utility lines marked, but every digging job requires a call - even small projects like planting trees and shrubs.

The depth of utility lines varies and there may be multiple utility lines in a common area. Digging without calling can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm you and those around you and potentially result in fines and repair costs. Calling 811 before every digging job gets your underground utility lines marked for free and helps prevent undesired consequences.

How it Works: Getting your lines marked is quick and easy with 811. When you dial 811, your call is forwarded to the One-Call Center in your area for processing. Local One-Call Center



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

operators record the location of the dig and then notify the affected utility companies of your digging plans. Your utility companies then dispatch a professional locating crew to mark the approximate location of your lines within a few days.

You should be sure to call 811 a few days in advance of your scheduled dig to allow time for the request to be processed. Once your lines are marked, you will know their approximate location and you can dig safely. Knowing what's below will protect you, your family, and your neighbors.

Gas leak? Know how to respond

Recent natural gas explosions and fires in Memphis emphasize how important it is to know your gas and stay safe! The accidents emphasize how important it is to know your gas to stay safe! It smells like rotten eggs or sulfur, and it’s stinky! Know what to do if you smell a strong natural gas odor.

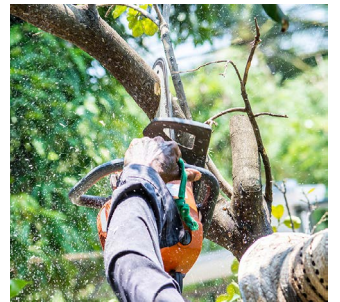
Natural gas leaks typically result from damaged underground pipelines or gas appliances. MLGW adds mercaptan to give gas its rotten egg smell, detectable indoors by the strong odor. Outdoor gas pipeline leaks offer hints such as water bubbling near the site, dirt/debris blowing into the air or dying vegetation/frozen ground near a pipeline.

If you suspect a gas leak:

- Leave the area immediately! Abandon house, building, vehicles, and equipment.
- Don’t cause spark by smoking or using matches, phones, electricity or flashlights.
- Use cell phone outside or neighbor’s phone to call **MLGW at 528-4465** and **911**.
- Don’t start vehicles or equipment near leak.

Proactive program

Next to severe weather, interference from trees and branches is a major cause of power outages within the MLGW service area. Rot, heavy rain and even car accidents can cause trees to fall over and drag power lines down with them. Overgrown limbs can knock into utility lines causing faults and disrupting power for entire neighborhoods.



Because these are not uncommon circumstances in our community, MLGW has one of the most proactive tree trimming programs in the country. Most of our trees are trimmed an average of every three-to-five years. Tree trimming, or line clearance, is considered part of our infrastructure and MLGW works year-round to keep limbs and branches in check.

If you know of a tree that is interfering with a power line or in direct contact with one, please call 544-6549 and let us know. Never try to trim limbs that are near or touching power lines yourself. Be safe and call MLGW instead.

Gift of Comfort Updated

Tens-of-thousands of MLGW customers, both residential and commercial, have fallen short on bills since the COVID-19 pandemic swept into our community last March. If a friend, or neighbor, is in need and you can help, you can give the Gift of Comfort.

MLGW’s Gift of Comfort program allows you to make a payment towards someone else’s bill. All you need the customer’s first initial, last name and the street number of their address.



For example: J DOE 1244.

MLGW has updated the program so you can now send the Gift of Comfort online. You can also still mail or drop off a check to participate. The Gift of Comfort can be made anonymously, or you can share your name with the recipient. Visit mlgw.com/GiftofComfort and help a friend today.