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Smart Winter-Storm Tips for Gas Utility Customers

With the upcoming winter storm CNNGA would like to remind its customers of some key concepts that may keep you warm and safe throughout the severe weather.



Safety First During Extreme Cold

- Never use generators or grills or other outdoor cookers inside. These create dangerous carbon monoxide risks.
- Install and test carbon monoxide detectors. Replace batteries yearly and ensure detectors are placed on every level of the home.
- Know how to recognize gas leaks. A rotten-egg smell, hissing sounds, or dead vegetation near gas lines require immediate action: leave the area and contact the utility or emergency services from a safe location.

- Report damaged or iced-over gas equipment. If you believe you have a gas issue with your gas meter or service regulator, contact CNNGA. Customers should never attempt repairs themselves. Doing so is a risk and could cause a dangerous situation.



Prevent Your Water Pipes from Freezing When Power Is Lost

Frozen pipes are one of the most common and expensive cold-weather failures. A few simple steps can prevent major damage.

Keep Water Moving

- Let faucets drip slowly. Even a thin stream reduces the chance of freezing.
- Prioritize vulnerable areas. Pipes in attics, crawl spaces, exterior walls, and garages freeze first.

Add Insulation and Protection

- Wrap exposed pipes with foam insulation or heat tape.
- Seal gaps around pipes. Cold air entering through cracks can freeze pipes quickly.
- Open cabinet doors. This allows warm air to reach pipes under sinks.

If a Pipe Freezes

- Turn off the main water supply. This prevents flooding if the pipe bursts.
- Thaw pipes slowly and safely. Use warm air from a hair dryer — never open flames or torches.
- Call a professional if unsure. Improper thawing can cause more damage.

Protect Tankless Water Heaters During Power Outages

Tankless units are especially vulnerable in freezing weather because they rely on electric freeze-protection systems. When the power goes out, those systems stop working — and the heat exchanger can freeze and crack.

If the Power Goes Out

- Turn off the unit and shut off the gas supply. This prevents damage if ice forms inside the heater.
- Open hot-water taps slightly. A slow trickle of warm water (if available) helps keep water moving through pipes and the heater.
- Drain the tankless heater if temperatures will stay below freezing.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Use covers designed for tankless heaters
- Add wind protection. Wind chill dramatically increases freezing risk. A simple windbreak or enclosure helps.
- Use heat tape on exposed water lines. Only use products rated for outdoor plumbing.
- Ensure proper clearance. Snow drifts can block vents or trap moisture around the unit.



Reduce Excessive Gas Consumption

- Lower the thermostat a few degrees. Even a small adjustment can significantly reduce gas usage during peak demand. 68-70 Degrees is a comfortable recommended temperature setting
- Use programmable or smart thermostats wisely. Set schedules that avoid unnecessary heating when no one is home.
- Seal drafts around doors and windows. Weatherstripping and simple draft blockers help keep heat inside.
- Close blinds and curtains at night. This reduces heat loss through windows.
- Limit use of vented gas fireplaces. They can consume large amounts of gas while providing limited heating.



Keep Your Home's Heating System Running Efficiently

- Replace or clean furnace filters regularly. Dirty filters force the system to work harder and use more gas.
- Have heating equipment inspected annually. A tune-up improves efficiency and reduces the risk of breakdowns during extreme cold.
- Keep interior doors open. This promotes better airflow and reduces strain on the heating system.
- Avoid blocking vents with furniture or rugs. Restricted airflow increases energy use and uneven heating.



Prepare Before the Storm Hits

- Locate the gas shutoff valve and know when to use it. Only shut off gas if instructed by emergency personnel or the utility.
- Have backup heat sources ready. Vent Free heaters and logs are safe alternatives for back up heat.
- Keep emergency contact numbers handy. Save the Gas Authority's number in your cell phone. If you have a gas related emergency call CNNGA at 864-833-1862.
- Stock up on food and water supplies as well as other essentials. Extra blankets, batteries, and flashlights help reduce reliance on heating during short outages.