

STAY SAFE THIS WINTER

Check your meter vent

The natural gas meter's regulator vent needs to stay clear so gas can flow into the house properly. If the vent gets blocked, the gas pressure can become too high or too low, which can cause no gas to flow through the meter, a fire or explosion. A blockage can also lead to carbon monoxide poisoning.

Clear a path to your meter

Shovel or plow a path to your meter and ensure your natural gas meter is visible at all times and accessible for maintenance and emergency responders.

Don't bury your meter

Take care not to cover meters when shoveling or snow-blowing.

Watch for falling snow and ice

Check to ensure that melting snow or ice from the roof or nearby trees is not dripping on the meter, and that the meter is clear following rooftop snow removal.

Plow with caution

Be sure to avoid meters and pad-mounted transformers (the large green electric boxes often located near walkways) while plowing. If you hit the equipment, be sure to report it right away.

Prepare for higher energy bills

Energy bills are typically higher in the winter due to keeping your home warm on cold days. The short days also mean we spend more time with our lights on, and energy use increases around the holidays with decorations and more cooking.

Keep your meter clear of snow and ice

Carefully remove snow or ice from the gas meter and any associated piping. Do this gently with a broom or by hand.

Stay away from downed power lines

Heavy snow can cause downed power lines. If you see a downed line, stay away from it and report it to NorthWestern Energy immediately. Assume all downed lines are energized and dangerous.



Recognizing a gas pipeline leak

A gas leak is often recognized by smell, sight, or sound:

- **Smell** — A distinctive sulfur-like or rotten-egg odor.
- **Look** — You may see dirt blowing into the air from a hole in the ground; continuous bubbling in water; dead or dying vegetation (in an otherwise moist area); a damaged connection to a gas appliance; or an exposed pipeline after an earthquake, fire, flood or other disaster.
- **Listen** — You may hear a hissing, whistling or roaring sound as natural gas escapes from a pipe.

From a safe location, at least 300 feet from the suspected leak, call 911 and NorthWestern Energy, any time, day or night.

Don't wait to sign up for energy assistance

As temperatures drop this winter, your heating system will work harder to heat your home, and you will likely see an increase in energy bills.

If you're concerned about paying your bill this winter, reach out to us right away. We have billing and payment options that can help. We can also help determine if you qualify for assistance from various government and nonprofit programs.

Don't wait until you fall behind on your bill. The sooner you sign up for payment assistance, the easier it will be to stay on top of winter energy bills.

Learn more at NorthWesternEnergy.com/heat or by calling us.