

News For You



**Western Massachusetts
Electric**

A Northeast Utilities Company

Stay Warm And Safe This Winter

Western Massachusetts Electric wants you and your family to stay safe this winter season. Whether you heat your home with oil, natural gas, coal or wood, your heating system can produce carbon monoxide if it is not working properly or inadequately vented.

Carbon monoxide is very dangerous because its symptoms can resemble the flu and it is an odorless, colorless and tasteless gas. That is why it is important to make sure every level of your home has a carbon monoxide detector installed. In fact, since 2006 most residential homes are required to have carbon monoxide detectors under Massachusetts state law.



If you suspect the presence of carbon monoxide open all your windows and doors and call your local fire department. If carbon monoxide is detected, seek immediate medical attention.

Please keep the following tips in mind:

- To reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning, have your heating equipment “tuned up” each year.
- Make sure your home is adequately ventilated.
- Make sure any vents on the outside of your home are completely unobstructed and able to properly ventilate, especially after a snow storm.

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Donate to the Good Neighbor Energy Fund

Now in its 29th year, the Good Neighbor Energy Fund, administered by the Salvation Army, aims to help Massachusetts residents who are in temporary crisis, struggling to pay their energy bills and do not qualify for other federal or state energy funds.



You can contribute to the Good Neighbor Energy Fund through the Add-A-Dollar program. By pledging your support, \$1 will be added to your bill each month and WMECo will also match 50 cents of your contribution.

You can also choose to donate more than a dollar, up to \$10 a month by calling 877-659-6326 (413-781-4300 within the Springfield area). One-time donations can also be made by including a check with your monthly bill made payable to the Good Neighbor Energy Fund.

For more information, magoodneighbor.org or the “Our Community” section of WMECo.com.

Save Energy This Winter With These Helpful Tips

The following tips will save you and your family energy and help your budget as the weather cools down.

- Set your thermostat no higher than 68 degrees when you are home and lower the temperature when you go to bed or when you are not at home. This will ensure optimal home heating and save energy.
- For every degree you lower your thermostat you save about 2 percent off your heating bill.
- Cut annual heating bills by as much as 10 percent a year by turning your thermostat back 10 to 15 percent for eight hours a day.
- Weatherize your home by caulking and weather-stripping all doors and windows. Also use locks on your windows to make them tighter and draft resistant.
- Insulate or increase the amount of insulation in your attic, basement and outside walls. Also cover through-the-wall air conditioners to prevent cold air from leaking into your home.
- Reducing air leaks could cut 10 percent from an average household's monthly energy bill. The most common places where air escapes homes are: floors, walls, ceilings, ducts, fireplaces, plumbing penetrations, doors, windows, fans, vents and electrical outlets.
- Keep shades and curtains open during the day on the south side of your home to allow solar heating. Close them at night to retain heat.
- Don't block your radiators or heating vents with furniture or draperies. Keep your radiators, registers and baseboard heaters dirt and dust free. Close vents and doors in unused rooms.



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- Turn off space heaters when you leave a room or plan to sleep.
- Keep space heaters at least three feet from flammable objects such as a wall, bedding and curtains.
- Never use extension cords with space heaters and make sure the space heater's cord isn't damaged or frayed.
- Never leave a fire in a fireplace unattended.
- Always use a fire screen.
- Be sure dampers work properly and flues are regularly cleaned and inspected.



Please visit the "Safety, Security & Lighting" section of WMECo.com for more important safety tips.



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