

Government and External Affairs Elected Officials Winter Ready Letter



An Exelon Company

November 9th, 2020

As temperatures dip and winter quickly approaches, I would like to provide you with important information about BGE's preparations for winter and customer resources designed to help customers during the 2020-2021 heating season.

BGE has completed a number of major infrastructure enhancement projects, as well as a comprehensive review of its natural gas and electric systems. This is part of a more than \$2.1 billion investment BGE made in 2020 to the energy systems serving our customers. The winter preparedness system upgrades, inspections and maintenance will help to ensure the safe, reliable delivery of natural gas and electric service for BGE's 1.3 million electric and 680,000 natural gas customers throughout the winter heating season.

One major component of our winter preparations is helping customers who may be challenged by winter energy costs. Assistance is available for BGE customers, including those with limited household incomes who need help in paying their energy bills. Just as BGE prepares in advance for the winter heating season, the company encourages all customers to prepare their homes and businesses for the colder winter months. Customers may visit [BGE.COM/Save](https://www.bge.com/save) for tips and information on saving energy, even on the coldest days.

For your information, we have included links to several helpful resources for customers:

- [BGE.com/BillHelp](https://www.bge.com/billhelp). Throughout the pandemic, we have been working closely with customers to offer flexible payment arrangement plans and direct customers to energy assistance resources. Any customers who are behind on their energy bills should visit this helpful resource center to learn about the programs available to them. The key is contacting BGE as soon as possible. BGE encourages customers not to wait until they are in crisis to ask for help but rather to contact their local [Office of Home Energy Programs](#) online or by calling 1-800-352-1446.
- [BGENow](#), BGE's content hub which features information and tips on preparing homes and businesses for the colder temperatures, as well as information on saving energy and money, even on the coldest days.
- [BGE's 2020-2021 Community Resource Guide](#) which is a collection of resources and information about assistance programs of all kinds – federal, state and local, as well as programs from BGE and non-profit providers. Click [here](#) for a Spanish language version of this resource.

- The [BGE Smart Energy Savers Program®](http://bgesmartenergy.com) website at bgesmartenergy.com lists all of the energy efficiency and conservation programs available to BGE customers, including appliance rebates, lighting discounts, and free Quick Home Energy Check-Ups.

During the colder months, heating systems typically account for more than 40 percent of customers' energy bills because extreme weather generally triggers significant increases in energy use at home. Even when the thermostat is kept at the same temperature, heating units must work harder to maintain the set temperature. Without taking steps to save energy during these times, energy bills will reflect additional usage and will likely be higher than in months when temperatures are more moderate. BGE encourages all customers to think about simple steps they can take in their home to save energy each day, no matter the temperature outside. The following are steps that all customers can take to reduce energy consumption and lower heating bills:

- **Maintain Your Heating Systems and Gas and Electric Appliances** – Most of your cold weather energy expenses are related to heating your home. Schedule service for your heating system to find out what maintenance is required to keep your system operating safely and efficiently. Use only licensed appliance technicians and plumbers to inspect and service natural gas appliances such as stoves, water heaters, furnaces, dryers, gas fireplaces and other gas equipment. Home electric equipment and wiring should also be routinely inspected and maintained by licensed electricians and appliance technicians.
- **Lower Your Water Heating Costs** – Water heating accounts for about 18% of the energy consumed in your home. Turn down the temperature of your water heater to the warm setting (120°F) and save.
- **Adjust the Temperature** – When you are at home and awake, set your thermostat as low as it is comfortable for you. When you are asleep or out of the house, turn your thermostat back 10° to 15° for eight hours and save around 10% a year on your heating bills. A programmable thermostat can make it easy to set back your temperature. If you have a heat pump, maintain a moderate setting or use a programmable thermostat specially designed for use with heat pumps.
- **My Account Online Tools** – Your BGE online account contains tools and detailed energy usage information. By viewing your energy usage right after you use it, comparing usage trends, and discovering the results of energy-saving practices, you can manage your energy more efficiently. Log onto BGE.com/MyAccount to get started.
 - Customers may also consider BGE's [Budget Billing](#) program, which evens out payments over a 12-month period so customers are not as affected by increases in usage triggered by extreme weather conditions.
- **Sign up for High Usage Alerts:** Receive a notification by text, email or phone if your energy usage is trending higher than usual so you can take steps to reduce your use before your bill arrives. You can also set a budget threshold to alert you when your bill is projected to be higher than a specific amount each month. Login to My Account to sign up for High Usage Alerts at BGE.com/MyNotifications.

- **Keep Your Natural Gas Appliances Vents Clear** – Know where your natural gas appliances vent to the exterior and [*ensure the vents are clear*](#). Some high efficiency gas appliances, such as water heaters and furnaces, vent along the foundation of buildings. If these vents become blocked by snow or ice, exhaust may back up resulting in carbon monoxide build-up or a release of natural gas. If you smell natural gas or suspect a gas leak, we urge you to call BGE at 1-877-778-7798 or 1-800-685-0123 from a safe distance.

I hope that you and your constituents find this information helpful. If you would like to discuss these issues further or would like additional information on any of the above resources, please call me at 410.470.1215.

Sincerely,

Charles Washington
BGE
Director, Governmental and External Affairs