

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2009

SAVING MONEY

Helping you find ways to manage your heating bills



SAFETY

Water heater safety
What to do if you suspect a gas leak



SERVICE

Coming this spring: a gas bill that's easier to read



SAVING MONEY >>>

ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT WINTER GAS BILLS

The Gas CompanySM is committed to helping customers manage their energy use to save money. The following answers to commonly asked questions can help you better understand and manage your winter bills.

Q> Why are my gas bills higher during the winter?

A. About 65% of a typical residential winter gas bill is due to home heating. The colder it gets outdoors, the harder your furnace works to maintain your comfort indoors. Likewise, your water heater stays on longer to heat the colder incoming water.

Q> What is the easiest step I can take today to lower my next gas bill?

A. You can cut home-heating costs up to 30% simply by turning your furnace thermostat down 3 to 5 degrees. Try adding an extra layer of clothing or bedding to help you keep warm.

Q> What else can I do to help save money?

A. Saving energy saves money, so try our energy-efficiency programs. Get started by taking our free online Home



Energy and Water Efficiency Survey to learn ways to save energy, water – and money! You'll find the survey, plus links to conservation tips, rebate information and more at www.socalgas.com/energyefficiency/.

Q> Can you level my gas bill payments?

A. Yes, when you enroll in our Level Pay Plan, we can help average out the highs and lows of your gas bills so that your payments are more predictable.

Q> What financial assistance is available to help lower my gas bills?

A. Provided you meet certain criteria, such as limited household income, you may qualify for a 20% discount on your gas bill, free home weatherization services or other help. For more information, visit www.socalgas.com/assistance/. If you think you may have trouble paying your bill, be sure to call us right away at **1-800-427-2200** so that we can work with you on making payment arrangements.

SAFETY >>>

To help keep your family safe,
USE YOUR WATER HEATER WITH CARE

Like any natural gas appliance, your water heater should be used with care. Taking a few simple precautions can help keep your family safe.

- Never use or store flammable products, such as gasoline or paint thinner, near your water heater. Always keep the surrounding area clean and well ventilated.
- Some water heaters must be installed at least 18 inches above the floor. Check the manufacturer's instructions or local building codes to confirm installation requirements.
- To avoid scalding accidents, set the water heater thermostat at or slightly below the temperature recommended by the manufacturer.
- To keep your water heater anchored during an earthquake, strap it firmly to the wall studs. Kits and instructions are available at most hardware stores.

Find more safety tips at www.socalgas.com/safety/.



SERVICE >>>

AN EASIER-TO-READ BILL will debut this spring

A new look for your natural gas bill is set to debut in April. Thanks to customer suggestions on how to improve the bill, the new format will be larger and easier to read. A new graph will show your gas use at a glance for the most recent 13-month period. Details will be more clearly presented so that you can better understand and manage your energy use.

Our online bills will also have a new look. If you'd like the convenience and flexibility of paperless online billing and payment, sign up for My Account.

My Account users can view up to 25 months of their gas use history, schedule service appointments and more! Try it today – www.socalgas.com/myaccount/.



TIMELY TIP

You may be eligible to receive **free, energy-saving home improvements** through the Direct Assistance Program (DAP). Improvements available to income-qualified renters and homeowners may include ceiling insulation, door weatherstripping, caulking, low-flow showerheads and more. To see if you qualify visit www.socalgas.com/assistance/ or call **1-800-331-7593**.

Know the signs of a **GAS LEAK** and what to do if you suspect one

It's important to know that any of the following signs may indicate the presence of a gas leak:

- The distinct odor of natural gas.*
- A damaged connection to a gas appliance.
- A hissing, whistling or roaring sound near a gas appliance or a pipeline. (Special markers show the location of most major pipelines.)
- Dead or dying vegetation (in an otherwise moist area) over or near pipeline areas.
- A fire or explosion near a pipeline.
- Dirt or water being thrown in the air.
- Exposed pipeline after an earthquake, fire, flood or other disaster.



If you smell a natural gas odor, hear the sound of gas escaping or see other signs of a

leak:

- REMAIN calm.
 - DON'T light a match, candle or cigarette.
 - DON'T turn electrical appliances or lights on or off.
 - From a safe location, call The Gas Company at **1-800-427-2200** 24 hours a day, seven days a week; or call **911**.
- * Although The Gas Company adds a distinctive odor to natural gas to aid in the detection of leaks, you should not rely on your sense of smell alone to determine if you have a gas leak. Some persons may not be able to smell the odorant because they have a diminished sense of smell or because the odorant is being masked by other odors in the area. In addition, certain conditions may cause the odorant to fade so that it is not detectable.

FEBRERO/MARZO DE 2009

NOTICIAS DE THE GAS COMPANY

Conozca las señales y sepa qué hacer si sospecha que hay una **FUGA DE GAS**

Es importante saber que cualquiera de las siguientes señales puede indicar que hay una fuga de gas:

- El olor distintivo del gas natural.*
- Una conexión a un aparato doméstico de gas que esté dañada.
- Un sonido sibilante, un silbido o rugido cerca de un aparato de gas o gasoducto (marcadores especiales muestran el lugar de la mayoría de los gasoductos principales).
- Vegetación muerta o muriéndose (en donde en otras circunstancias fuera un área húmeda) encima o cerca de zonas donde hay gasoductos.
- Un incendio o explosión cerca de un gasoducto.
- Tierra o agua que sale expulsada al aire.
- Tubería expuesta después de un terremoto, incendio, inundación u otro desastre.



Si percibe un olor a gas natural, escucha el sonido de gas escapándose o ve otras señales de que hay una fuga:

- CONSERVE la calma.
- NO encienda un cerillo, vela, ni cigarrillo.
- NO encienda ni apague aparatos eléctricos o luces.
- Desde un lugar seguro, llame a The Gas Company al **1-800-342-4545** 24 horas al día, siete días a la semana, o llame al **911**.

* Aunque The Gas Company añade un olor distintivo al gas natural para ayudar en la detección de fugas, no debe depender únicamente de su sentido del olfato para determinar si hay una fuga de gas. Algunas personas tal vez no puedan oler la sustancia olorosa porque tienen un sentido del olfato disminuido o porque la sustancia olorosa está siendo ocultada por otros olores que hay en el área. Además, ciertas condiciones pueden ocasionar que la sustancia olorosa se desvanezca de tal forma que no sea detectable.

Para ayudar a mantener a su familia segura, **USE SU CALENTADOR DE AGUA CON CUIDADO**

Como cualquier otro aparato doméstico de gas natural, su calentador de agua debe usarse con cuidado. Tomar algunas precauciones sencillas puede ayudar a mantener a su familia a salvo.

- Nunca use o almacene productos inflamables, como gasolina o solvente para pintura, cerca de su calentador de agua. Siempre mantenga el área circundante despejada y bien ventilada.
- Algunos calentadores de agua deben ser instalados cuando menos a 18 pulgadas arriba del piso. Verifique las instrucciones del fabricante o códigos locales de edificio para confirmar.

- Para evitar accidentes por escaldaduras, ajuste el termostato del calentador de agua en o ligeramente por debajo de la temperatura recomendada por el fabricante.
- Para mantener anclado su calentador de agua durante un terremoto, sujételo firmemente con una abrazadera a los montantes de la pared. Puede encontrar kits e instrucciones en la mayoría de las ferreterías.

Encuentre más sugerencias de seguridad en www.socalgas.com/sp/seguridad/.

SUGERENCIA OPORTUNA

Tal vez reúna los requisitos para recibir mejoras gratuitas que ahorran energía en casa a través del Programa de Asistencia Directa (DAP). Las mejoras que están a disposición de los inquilinos y propietarios que reúnen los requisitos pueden incluir aislamiento de techo, colocación de burlletes en puertas, enmasillado, cabezales de bajo flujo para regadera y más. Vea si cumple con las condiciones en www.socalgas.com/sp/asistencia/ o llamando al **1-800-331-7593**.