



## Simplify your life with Online Billing and Automatic Bank Draft

As many people resolve to remove clutter and stress from their lives in the new year, our Online Billing and Automatic Bank Draft services will help customers make bill paying easier than ever.

When customers enroll in Online Billing, they receive an e-mail when their monthly natural gas bill is ready to view and pay online. They can pay their bill immediately or schedule a payment. For ultimate convenience, combine Online Billing with Automatic Bank Draft and a customer's payment will be automatically deducted from their bank account.

Online Billing and Automatic Bank Draft are free and secure, and customers will never lift a finger to write a check or mail in a payment. Keeping New Year's resolutions couldn't be easier!

Enroll today from your personalized My Account Online screen. If you haven't registered for My Account Online, visit [CenterPointEnergy.com/myaccountonline](http://CenterPointEnergy.com/myaccountonline).

## Make informed decisions about your energy use

CenterPoint Energy's handy online Home Energy Costs and Emissions Calculator will help customers discover the benefits of clean-burning, efficient natural gas. This easy-to-use tool allows customers to:

- Calculate annual energy use for heating, water heating, clothes drying and cooking.
- See the cost difference between using natural gas versus electricity.
- Compare annual operating costs for both standard- and high-efficiency heating and water heating equipment.
- Learn about the environmental impact between using natural gas and electricity.
- Find out how making simple changes, such as drying fewer loads of clothes, can lower energy bills.

For custom calculations, visit [CenterPointEnergy.com/gasisbetter](http://CenterPointEnergy.com/gasisbetter).

## What to do if you smell gas

Natural gas has an excellent safety record. Still, it's important to know what to do if you suspect a natural gas leak. Natural gas actually has no odor, so CenterPoint Energy adds a scent similar to rotten eggs, so that you can detect a gas leak if you smell this odor inside your home or building. If you smell natural gas, follow these steps:

**Step 1:** Leave immediately! Do not use electric switches, telephones (including cell phones) or anything that could cause a spark.

**Step 2:** Go to a safe location in a nearby home or building, and then call our Emergency Gas Leak Hotline (See box to the right). Never assume that someone else has reported the leak. CenterPoint Energy will check all suspected natural gas leaks at no cost to you.

**Step 3:** Never try to repair a natural gas leak yourself. Leave all repairs to a trained technician.

## Partner with CenterPoint Energy to give the gift of life

Every two seconds, someone in the United States needs blood. That's why CenterPoint Energy employees proudly and selflessly gave more than 4,000 units of blood in 2009. You can help CenterPoint Energy in serving this critical need by donating blood at your community blood center. To find your neighborhood center, visit [CenterPointEnergy.com/giveblood](http://CenterPointEnergy.com/giveblood).

Learn more about the numerous ways CenterPoint Energy works to be a good neighbor at [CenterPointEnergy.com/community](http://CenterPointEnergy.com/community).



Tom Standish, group president and chief operating officer of Regulated Operations, participates in a CenterPoint Energy blood drive.

## Reduce Your Carbon Footprint

Did you know that a home with natural gas for heating, water heating, cooking and clothes drying leaves half the carbon footprint of an all-electric home? Natural gas burns cleaner and more efficiently than any other energy source.



### Emergency Gas Leak Hotlines

- |                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Louisiana, Mississippi, |              |
| Oklahoma, Texas:        | 888-876-5786 |
| Arkansas:               | 800-992-7552 |
| Minnesota:              | 800-722-9326 |

## Payment assistance is available

If you are having trouble paying your natural gas bill, contact us. We can tell you about the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, the Gas Affordability Program and other resources. Call 612-372-4680; 1-800-729-6164 or visit [CenterPointEnergy.com/paybill](http://CenterPointEnergy.com/paybill).

## Protect your meter

This winter, snow and ice can accumulate on or near meters, causing potentially dangerous conditions. Although meter problems due to weather are uncommon, follow these tips to prevent them:

- Keep meter area and a path to your meter clear of snow, leaves and debris. Do not use a snow or leaf blower near the meter.
- Do not attempt to remove ice from the meter yourself. If you observe ice on your meter or one or more of the following conditions, report it to us by calling 612-321-5200; 1-800-722-9326:
  - Snow or ice formations are visible above the meter.
  - Meter is located below a downspout.
  - Overhang or eave does not fully extend over the meter.
  - Meter is located below a roof valley without a gutter.
  - Meter is located below an exterior water spigot.

## HeatShare: helping families since 1982

Thanks to the partnership between the Salvation Army and CenterPoint Energy and the generosity of CenterPoint Energy customers, thousands of Minnesotans struggling to pay their heating bills have been helped through difficult times by Salvation Army's HeatShare. With the current financial crisis, the need for assistance is greater than ever. Contribute today by completing the form below or contributing online at [CenterPointEnergy.com/heatshare](http://CenterPointEnergy.com/heatshare).

## New year, new energy efficiency programs

CenterPoint Energy customers can enjoy new and expanded energy-efficiency programs that will help cut costs and save energy in 2010 and beyond.

### Enhancements to our existing programs include:

- **Heating System Rebates** – Receive up to \$500 in rebates when replacing or upgrading furnaces or boilers to a high-efficiency model.
- **Water Heater Rebates** – Enjoy \$200 in new rebates for an indirect water heater installed with a condensing boiler and up to \$100 in rebates for high-efficiency natural gas storage tank water heaters.



### New programs include:

- **Hearth Rebates** – Receive \$75 in rebates for natural gas fireplaces, inserts and free-standing stoves that have an electronic ignition.
- **Insulation Rebates** – Receive rebates for 50% of the cost (up to \$400) for air sealing and wall and attic insulation installed by a licensed contractor. An energy audit by a state-certified auditor is required as a prerequisite for this program.

For more details on existing and expanded energy-saving programs, visit [CenterPointEnergy.com/rebates](http://CenterPointEnergy.com/rebates) or call 612-399-1545 (toll free 1-888-525-1566).

## What you should know about carbon monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, tasteless, non-irritating gas, which when breathed into the body, combines with the blood and prevents it from absorbing oxygen, causing illness or death. CO usually is produced while burning fuels such as gasoline, coal, wood, charcoal, kerosene, natural gas, propane, heating oil and almost any other combustible material. Improperly adjusted or poorly maintained fuel-burning equipment and appliances can cause dangerous levels of CO to accumulate. There is an even greater risk of CO accumulation when a home is tightly sealed and not properly ventilated.

### How to prevent CO in the home

- Never operate an automobile, lawn mower or any combustion engine, barbecue grill or similar equipment in an enclosed area such as your home, garage, tent, trailer or fish house, even with the door open.
- Never leave a fire smoldering in your fireplace.
- Make sure to have a carbon monoxide alarm(s) installed in your home. This is now required by state law.
- Have fuel-burning equipment regularly inspected by a qualified technician.
- Never try to heat a room with a gas range, oven, clothes dryer or portable fuel-burning heater.

For more information, visit [CenterPointEnergy.com/besafe](http://CenterPointEnergy.com/besafe).

©2009 CenterPoint Energy 92446



To contribute to HeatShare, you may contribute at [CenterPointEnergy.com/heatshare](http://CenterPointEnergy.com/heatshare), or complete this form and return it with your next natural gas bill payment. Thank you.

**Yes! I will share the warmth.**

Each month I would like to have the following contribution to HeatShare conveniently included on my bill:  \$2  \$5  \$10  \$25  Other amount \$\_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to make a one-time contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ (You may either enclose a separate check made payable to HeatShare, or include your contribution with your regular gas bill payment.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Account # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_