



# Get ready for cold weather

Don't wait until cold weather is here before making sure your heating system is working properly. Preparing your heating system before winter will help you stay warm, cozy and safe this heating season.

## Follow these tips to make sure your heating system is ready when winter comes:

- Have a licensed heating contractor perform a pre-winter furnace tuneup. A clean, well-maintained furnace can ensure that your heating system is running at maximum efficiency and ready to keep you warm when the weather turns cold. For a list of licensed heating contractors visit [montana-dakota.com/rates-and-services/trade-ally-program](http://montana-dakota.com/rates-and-services/trade-ally-program) or refer to your local telephone directory.
- Change your furnace filter monthly. A dirty filter restricts the flow of heated air from your furnace, causing it to work harder and deliver less heat.
- Make sure vents in the house are not obstructed. The air in your home needs to circulate easily through the vents and your furnace works less when heated air is not blocked and cooler air can circulate back freely.

*Keeping your furnace running efficiently will keep you warm all winter long.*



**In the Community  
to Serve®**

## Winter energy-saving tips

- ✿ Install a programmable setback thermostat. This can be an effective way to control heating costs, allowing the thermostat to be set for a cooler temperature while you are away from home and at night while you are sleeping.
- ✿ Check the furnace filter frequently and replace or clean it as needed.
- ✿ A humidifier can help control heating costs because the moist air will feel warmer, allowing the thermostat to be set at a lower temperature.
- ✿ Adjust register openings in the home. Remember that heat rises, so registers should be partially closed upstairs.
- ✿ Use draperies, blinds, curtains or shutters on all windows to slow the loss of heat through the glass. Keep window coverings open on sunny days to let in the sun's warmth.
- ✿ Rearrange furniture, placing it next to inside walls and away from windows. Avoid blocking registers with furniture, draperies or carpet.
- ✿ Use kitchen, bath and other ventilating fans sparingly. In just one hour, these fans can exhaust a houseful of warm air.
- ✿ Make sure the mountings on ceiling fans are snug and tight. Use clear caulking to seal any leaks or minor cracks around them.
- ✿ Purchase inexpensive, pre-cut insulation gaskets and seal out cold air entering the home through electrical switches and outlet plates.
- ✿ Closets and cabinets on outside walls can leak a great deal of cold air, so make sure the doors fit snugly and keep them tightly closed.



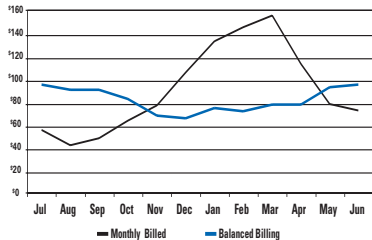
## Balanced Billing

**Take the guesswork out of budgeting** Balanced Billing provides customers a way to avoid the highs and lows associated with normal monthly billing. This plan helps take the guesswork out of budgeting for your utility bills.

**How Balanced Billing works** Your monthly bill is computed by taking an average of your natural gas and/or electric usage during the previous 11 months and the current month's usage. Current energy rates are then applied to this average monthly usage to calculate the current payment due. Averaging your usage over the year can reduce large cost fluctuations from extreme weather conditions.

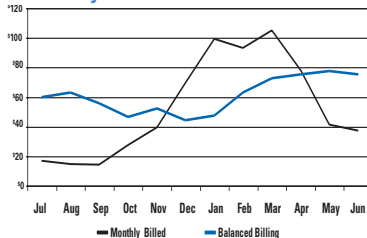
**Example:** The following graph is an illustration of how an actual MDU natural gas and electric customer's bill looks on Balanced Billing, and what it would look like without Balanced Billing.

### Gas and Electric



**Example:** The following graph is an illustration of how an actual MDU natural gas customer's bill looks on Balanced Billing, and what it would look like without Balanced Billing.

### Gas Only



To sign up for Balanced Billing, call 1-800-MDU-Fast (1-800-638-3278) or visit [montana-dakota.com](http://montana-dakota.com)

## Make sure your pilot light is working

Cooler weather will be here before you know it, and you don't want to be caught off guard on a chilly night. If your pilot light needs to be lit, avoid the rush and the weather, contact a licensed heating vendor.

Even though we cannot predict when the first cold snap will hit, you can be ready for it.

### Average low temperatures for Montana-Dakota customers

September ..... 45°

October ..... 33°

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Know what's below,  
Call before you dig.

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