

# Carbon Monoxide Safety

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a toxic, colorless, odorless and tasteless gas that is produced by incomplete burning of natural gas, propane, kerosene or any other fossil fuel heat. CO comes from poorly functioning appliances, or appliances that are not vented or are incorrectly vented. Appliances such as furnaces, space heaters and even gas or charcoal grills pose a threat. Outdoor equipment such as portable generators, heaters and stoves also can create dangerous levels of CO in cabins and hunting/fishing shacks.

CO can be especially dangerous during the winter when homes are sealed up tight. The best ways to protect your family from CO are to:

- Ensure that fuel-burning appliances are installed, maintained and used properly and safely. That includes having an annual inspection of heating and venting equipment by a qualified technician.
- Never let a vehicle idle inside an attached garage, even with the door open. The CO from the exhaust can collect in the garage or go inside the home.
- Install CO detectors on every level of your home. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper installation and location of CO detectors. Check and replace batteries in CO detectors on a regular basis.

## Warning Signs of CO Poisoning

Since the symptoms of CO poisoning are similar to the flu, victims often don't realize the cause of their illness. CO poisoning symptoms can occur immediately or more gradually after long-term exposure. Symptoms do not include a fever, but do include:

- Dizziness.
- Confusion.
- Shortness of breath.
- Nausea.
- Headaches.
- Fainting.
- Tightness in the chest.

If you suspect CO poisoning, get fresh air immediately. If exposure continues over a long period of time, CO poisoning can lead to brain damage or even death. If the symptoms are not accompanied by fever, if everyone in the family is ill, or you have pets acting strangely and the symptoms disappear when you leave the house, it could be CO poisoning.

If you suspect there is CO present in your home, call Montana-Dakota immediately at 1-800-638-3278.

 **MONTANA-DAKOTA**  
UTILITIES CO.  
A Division of MDU Resources Group, Inc.  
*In the Community to Serve®*



Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.



## Heading South for the winter? *Preparing your home for the cold of winter*

If you are leaving your home for the winter and heading for warmer weather, keep these tips in mind:

- Make sure your home's heating system is operating properly before you leave. Your furnace will be working hard while you are gone.
- To save on heating costs without having to worry about frozen pipes, you can lower your thermostat to 55 or 60 degrees.
- Set your water heater to a lower temperature while you are away and return it to the desired temperature when you return home.
- Arrange for someone to clean the snow and ice from your electric and natural gas meters. This will keep your meters operating properly and avoid any damage to the meters.
- Provide Montana-Dakota contact information in case there is an energy-related emergency while you are away.
- Make sure you have arranged for your monthly Montana-Dakota bill to be paid while you are away, to avoid non-payment problems. You also may access your bill with our online account services. Visit [Montana-Dakota.com](http://Montana-Dakota.com).

# 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 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.



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

## Energy-related emergency heating assistance

*Sometimes unexpected things  
happen to all of us.*

This includes having trouble paying your energy bill. Help is available through organizations in your area. Energy assistance organizations are run by private, nonprofit organizations or government agencies established to help people with energy-related emergencies in hardship circumstances. The organizations assist people with energy problems when no other resources are available to them and when these problems are caused by circumstances beyond their control. Donations generally come from voluntary contributions from individuals, organizations, churches, industry and the government.

If you would like to help, you can contribute when you pay your Montana-Dakota Utilities bill. Your tax-deductible gift will be sent to the energy assistance organization in your area. You also may contribute directly by contacting any organization listed below. Donations are voluntary. For more information, call 1-800-638-3278.

### **MONTANA**

Energy Share of Montana  
3117 Cooney Dr,  
Suite 102  
Helena, MT 59602  
1-888-779-7589

### **SOUTH DAKOTA**

Church Response  
30 Main St.  
Rapid City, SD 57701  
1-605-342-5360

### **WYOMING**

Energy Share of  
Wyoming  
c/o Align  
1401 Parkway,  
Suite 300  
Cheyenne, WY 82001  
1-877-461-5719

### **NORTH DAKOTA**

Energy Share of  
North Dakota  
P.O. Box 507  
Jamestown, ND 58402  
1-800-726-8179

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Find our Facebook link on our home page at [www.montana-dakota.com](http://www.montana-dakota.com), or simply do a Facebook search for Montana-Dakota Utilities.

