

# 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 800-638-3278.



Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.



## Heading South for the winter?

### Prepare 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).



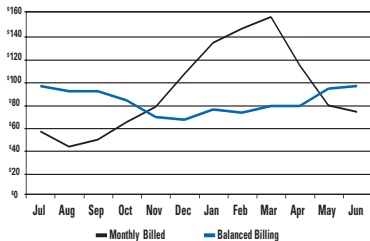
# BALANCED BILLING

**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 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.

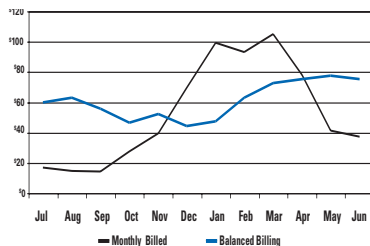
**EXAMPLE:** The following graph is an illustration of how an actual MDU natural gas and electric customer's bill looks on Balanced Billing, and what it would look like without Balanced Billing.

## 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 800-638-3278 or visit [www.montana-dakota.com](http://www.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 800-MDU-FAST (800-638-3278).

### MONTANA

Energy Share of Montana  
318 N. Last Chance Gulch,  
Suite 2B  
Helena, MT 59601  
888-779-7589

### SOUTH DAKOTA

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

### NORTH DAKOTA

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

### WYOMING

Energy Share of  
Wyoming  
c/o Align  
1401 Parkway,  
Jamestown, ND 58402  
Cheyenne, WY 82001  
877-461-5719