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# RG&E consumer news



## Tips for Winter Vacationers

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According to RG&E's Customer Service Department, hundreds of customers go south for vacations each winter. If you are one of these individuals and you want to know how to set your furnace and appliances in your absence, I have some suggestions:

**Heating:** Turn your thermostat back to the lowest setting, preferably 55°. Do not turn the furnace off because in very cold weather water lines could freeze and burst, causing considerable damage. If you do decide to turn your heat off, be sure to drain your water lines and protect any items which could freeze. A failure of one of the furnace controls on a very cold day could also cause damage. To avoid this I have two suggestions:

1. Ask a neighbor to check your house temperature while you are away. The neighbor should check every day when the outside temperature is 20° or less, and every two days when it is above 20°.

2. Buy a special control which will turn a light on if the house temperature drops below a certain level. For example, you first set the house thermostat back to 55°. Then you set the thermostat of the special control at 40°, attach a lamp to the control, and place the lamp in the window. If the house temperature drops below 40° the lamp will turn on. You will have to ask a neighbor to watch to see if the light turns on. This

control and others similar to it can be purchased from a heating contractor, from a hardware and heating supply store or from RG&E.

In either case you should give the neighbor instructions about who to call to make furnace repairs, if necessary.

**Appliances:** Set the control on a gas water heater to the "pilot" position.

You may want to shut off the water supply at the meter, depending on your heating system and other factors.

Remove all perishable items from the refrigerator and set the control to the warmest setting.

Unplug small appliances, entertainment appliances and other appliances which will not be used. This is particularly true if you have an "instant on" television set.

**Billing:** You can call RG&E at 546-1110 to ask that your meter not be read and that you not receive a bill until you return. Be sure to notify the Company when you do return. Or if you will be away for an extended period of time you can ask to have your RG&E bill forwarded to your winter address.

Do not forget to have delivery of your newspapers stopped and your mail held at the Post Office until you return. This kind of advance planning can give you peace of mind while you are away.

## Use Electric Space Heaters Wisely and Safely

Some of our customers are using electric space heaters in their homes this winter in an effort to adjust to today's energy situation. If you choose to heat small areas in your home this way, please remember the following:

Use an electric space heater judiciously. If the space being heated has not been properly weather-proofed the cost may be excessive. Use an electric space heater to warm the room you are in while you are in it, but don't expect it to perform around the clock like your home's heating system.

If you use a radiant-type electric space heater, keep combustible material far away from it and make sure there is plenty of open

space around it for proper air circulation.

Any unit you buy should have a seal of approval from Underwriters Laboratory, indicating that it meets established safety standards. It should also have a "tip-over" switch so that if it is accidentally knocked over it will shut off.

If you must use an extension cord with your heater, make sure it is a heavy-duty one. A light-weight extension cord for use with a lamp is not heavy enough to carry the heating load.

If your blow fuses or trip circuit breakers you are overloading the electrical system in your home. Call your electrician or our Residential Dept. for advice.

## At the Consumer Information Center Proper humidity level can reduce heating bills

Proper humidity level can reduce heating bills

Throughout the month of January, the Consumer Information Center on RG&E's Main Floor will focus attention on the problem of too little humidity. Browse through the center anytime, and if you want to talk with an expert from our Residential Department about your home's humidity problems call him on the Center's phone at 546-2700, extension 2751.

Problems from too dry air

By drawing on the home atmosphere for additional moisture, dry air can create several problems that are all too common during the cold winter months. Symptoms that dry air may

be a problem are: dry nasal passages, dry skin and scalp, peeling wallpaper, furniture joints coming unglued, static electricity and withering plants. Do you recognize these symptoms in your home?

What to do about too dry air

If these symptoms are prevalent in your home, you need supplementary humidification from a power humidifier, either the portable appliance type or the kind that is installed in your central heating system.

The air in your home draws moisture from several activities: showers, mopping and rinsing the kitchen floor, doing laundry, and food preparation, for example. In addition to these sources of moisture, it has been

estimated that homes in this area need supplementary humidification of about 5 to 10 gallons of moisture daily.

The amount of supplementary moisture needed in your home depends on several factors, such as the size of the house and how "tight" it is.

There are several things you can do to reduce the leakage of moisture and thereby reduce the need for supplementary moisture. You can install storm windows, lower your thermostat and caulk and weatherstrip around doors and windows.

Low humidity and a high heating bill

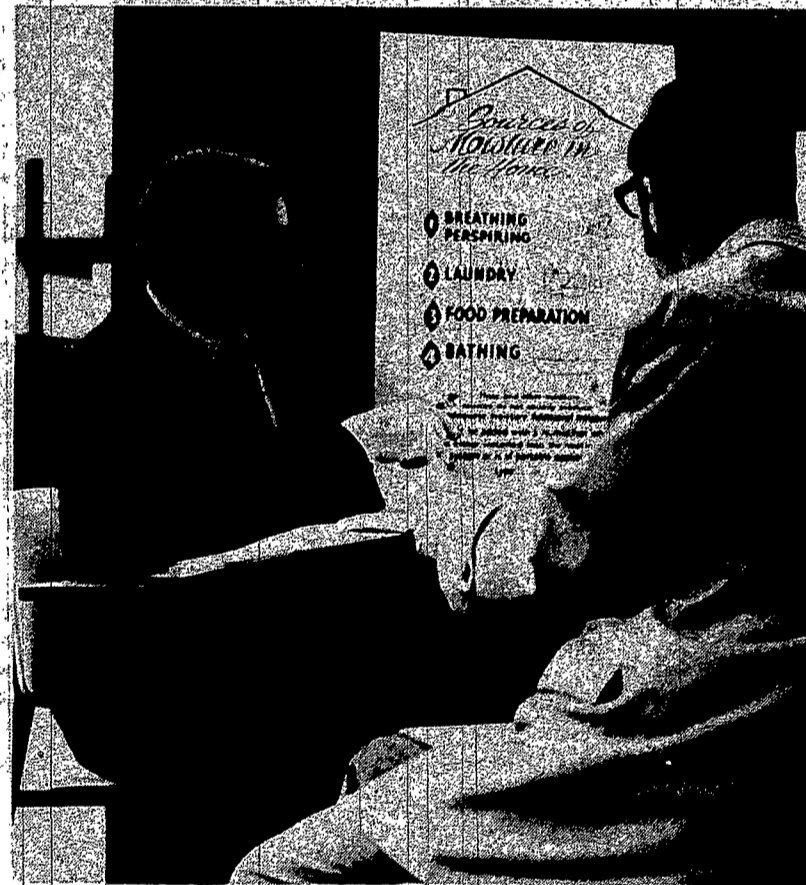
Air with an ideal amount of humidity improves the comfort conditions in your home because of the simple fact that you feel warmer in a more humid atmosphere. In a very dry atmosphere you may find yourself constantly raising the thermostat to keep the room warm, when what you really need to raise is the relative humidity. With adequate moisture you will feel more comfortable at a lower temperature; thus you require less heat.

It has been estimated that with power humidification you will use 2% less fuel. This takes into account the energy required to operate the power humidifier, either the type installed on a central warm air heating system or the portable, furniture-styled humidifier.

Recommended humidity levels for your home

A humidiguide, available at hardware and department stores, will tell you approximately the relative humidity in your home. Adjust your humidifier to correspond with these recommended humidity levels.

Outside Temp. (degrees F.)	Rec. Interior Relative Humidity
+20 & above	35%
+10	30%
0	25%
-10	20%
-20 & below	15%



From the Home Service Department

"Clip and Save" for future reference

1 cup uncooked rice = 3 cups cooked rice  
1 cup instant rice = 2 cups cooked rice  
1 pound uncooked macaroni = 2 1/2 quarts cooked  
1 pound noodles = 9 cups cooked

2 tablespoons dried egg + 2 tablespoons water = 1 egg  
2 tablespoons dried egg yolk + 2 tablespoons water = 1 egg yolk  
1 tablespoon dried egg white = 2 tablespoons water  
1 square of chocolate = 2 tablespoons cocoa + 1 tablespoon shortening

### Energy Conservation Booklets Available

Are you in the position of wanting to conserve energy while not knowing exactly what to do? RG&E has several booklets available which can help you. Send in the coupon on this page with a request for any or all of these booklets: "Living with the Energy Crisis," "Watt Watcher Handbook," "53 Ways to Save Money on Your Gas and Electric Bills," and "Know Your Range" (a booklet with particular emphasis on oven meals.)

FILL OUT AND RETURN THIS COUPON TO:

Dept. 34 Rochester Gas and Electric

89 East Avenue, Rochester, N.Y. 14649

I would like more information on the following items:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_