

RG&E consumer news

January 21, 1976



Safety With Conversion Furnaces

By Anne S. Fenstermacher
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RG&E service representatives are finding dangerous conditions in some area houses heated with converted furnaces. Apparently some people have noticed that their furnace's flue pipe was quite hot so they have closed off the flue's damper in order to reduce this heat loss and thereby conserve energy. This creates an unsafe and dangerous condition!

The damper was added to the flue pipe for a definite purpose when the furnace was converted from oil or coal to gas. Whereas a large flue was needed with coal and oil to create the proper draft, gas requires less draft, so upon conversion the damper was added to permit the contractor to make the proper draft adjustment.

However, some slight draft is needed to carry away the normal combustion products of carbon dioxide and water vapor. If the damper is closed beyond its proper setting, the burner will not have enough oxygen for complete combustion and carbon monoxide, a lethal gas, will be produced. Furthermore, if the damper is closed completely, this dangerous flue product will spill into the room. The

damper should be locked in place by a trained service person who knows how to set the damper for proper, efficient operation.

If you have changed the adjustment and suspect that the damper on your furnace is not set properly or if you smell fumes, call your regular heating contractor for advice. If the contractor makes a service call, there undoubtedly will be a charge but the service call may be necessary. In the meantime, keep the damper completely open (even though this wastes energy, it is the safest setting until properly adjusted).

If you have questions, call the Residential Department at 546-2700, Extension 2751, or fill out and send in the coupon below.

Save a Watt! Start By Visiting This Month's Consumer Information Center at RG&E

Conservation of our precious natural resources is of great importance in today's world, and this month's Consumer Information Center has all you'll need to begin watching your watts and comparing energy consumption among appliances.

First, you'll want to find out approximately how much energy per month is consumed by the various appliances around your home. Our Watt-Watcher Machine will help you do just that! Simply push a button, and a dollar-and-cents figure will light up above the appliance you

have selected. The costs are based on RG&E's current rates for the coverage consumer.

Then you will want to make calculations of energy consumption based on your own family's use. So pick up a copy of "The Watt-Watcher's Handbook" (in English or Spanish) to take home with you. It will give you simple formula to follow, to obtain a reasonably correct estimate of your energy consumption. From your results, you will be better able to determine easily and quickly what areas of energy usage in your

household could be cut down.

While you're at the CIC, be sure to pick up other useful information on display. For example, the booklet "If You're Under-insulated, You're Over-spending on Fuel" not only gives step-by-step directions for adding insulation to your ceiling, but also gives other tips on weather-proofing your home against the elements. "Should the Gas Pilot Light Be Turned Off?" discusses the pros and cons of that question with regard to the different gas appliances you may have in your home, in light of the energy crisis. Learn about a new concept in domestic electric heating which cuts energy consumption by a large percentage through our booklet "The Heat Pump Story." Other information is available as well—help yourself to one of each publication.

The Consumer Information Center is located on the main floor of RG&E's 89 East Avenue Office, and is open from 8 AM to 5 PM Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and from 8 AM to 9 PM Tuesdays and Thursdays. Come and visit soon!



See our Watt-Watcher Machine at the CIC.

Also from Anne Fenstermacher

Why Such High Heating Bills?

Why is your December RG&E bill so much higher than your November bill, you may be wondering? Bitter cold weather and the high cost of fuel are the major causes for the increase.

Weather: Ever since mid-December the weather has been bitter cold, considerably colder than November or last December. You may remember the coldest day was Christmas Eve when the high was 16° and the low was 4°.

RG&E keeps track of the weather conditions by using a "Degree Day" system which indicates the relative coldness of a month compared with other months. This information, based on official Weather Bureau figures, is a significant factor in determining whether this month's heating bill should be higher or lower than that of last month or of last December. For example, Degree days are figured by adding together a day's high and low temperatures, dividing by two, and subtracting from 65°—the temperature at which it is not necessary to heat your house. For example, if the day's high is 40° and the low 10° the added result is 50°. Dividing by two gives you 25° which you subtract from 65° to get the answer—40 Degree Days for that

day. RG&E divides its service area into 20 billing districts, each with its own scheduled meter reading, bill delivery and payable dates each on a different day of the month. Some billing periods in December included more cold days, and hence more degree days, than others. For example, there were 860 Degree Days in one district, 1200 Degree Days in another, where the bill covers the latter part of December. This means the heating requirements were greater in some billing districts than in others. In one billing district, the December bill covers days that were 123% colder than November and 14% colder than last December; in another, 143% colder than November and 14% colder than last December. It is important that you know the dates your bill covers to determine the degree day heating requirements on which your bill is based.

Cost of Fuel: Gas and other: The cost of gas and fuel to generate electricity which RG&E buys from its suppliers has continued to rise rapidly for the last two years. These costs are major components of RG&E's total costs over which the Company has little control, and they vary from month to month.

The adjustments allow passing on to you the costs

or savings above or below the basic cost of gas and fuel. Every month RG&E prints these variable adjustment rates on your bill. For example, the December gas cost adjustment was almost triple that of the adjustment rate a year ago. To find the dollar amount you are being charged, multiply the current adjustment rate by the number of hundred cubic feet of gas consumed. For example, \$.028600 x 315 ccf = \$9.00. This means your bill is increased over the basic rate by this amount. Although the adjustment rate is only slightly higher in December than in November, the amount of gas used is greater because of the colder weather, so the dollar amount is higher.

RG&E will willingly investigate any billing inquiries. You can have your billing questions answered by calling 546-1111, writing to RG&E at 89 East Avenue, Rochester, New York 14649, or visiting any RG&E office.

The prolonged cold December weather and the cost of gas and other fuels have been significant factors in causing our customers' bills to increase. RG&E's base rates for gas and electricity have not increased since Oct. 1974.

In future articles I will discuss ways to help you reduce your energy use.

Prevent Washer-Damaged Clothing

Damage to fabric in the washing machine can be divided into three categories:

1. Chemical damage caused by misuses of bleach
2. Damage caused by a weak spot in the fabric, and
3. Damage from a sharp object in the washing machine.

Any type of damage can be expensive, but all can be prevented by following good laundry procedures. To prevent tearing and shredding of fabrics in your washing machine, keep these ideas in mind:

—Use chlorine bleach properly. Always dilute 1 cup of bleach in 1 quart of water before adding. If not diluted, and added directly, bleach can disintegrate fabric.

—Use water level selector to be sure you have

enough water for the amount of clothes you are washing. Clothing cannot move freely in too little water, and agitation has a harsher effect.

—Mend all tears and rips, no matter how small, before washing.

—Fasten all zippers and hooks before washing so they won't catch on other clothing.

—Remove sharp objects, such as pins, before washing.

Prevention also can begin at point-of-purchase. You'll want to check for finished seams on garments and finished edges on towels before buying. If you purchase a garment which is poorly constructed, try to reinforce weak seams before you wear and/or wash it.

FILL OUT AND RETURN THIS COUPON TO:

Dept. 34 Rochester Gas and Electric
89 East Avenue, Rochester, N.Y. 14649
546-2700

CJ-34

I would like more information on the following items:

Name _____
Address _____ Phone _____
Town _____ Zip Code _____