

RGE consumer news



Cold Weather and Heating Bills

By Anne S. Fenstermacher

The effect of this fall's bitter cold weather is showing up in your heating bills. The colder the weather the more energy your furnace uses to keep your house warm.

Degree Days
This heating season has been considerably colder than last year's and also much colder than normal. RG&E keeps track of the weather conditions by using a "Degree Day" system which indicates the relative coldness of a period of time, such as a month compared with other months. The weather 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 subtracting the mean temperature (the average of the high and low temperatures) from 65° — the temperature at which it is not normally necessary to heat your house. For example, if the day's high is 40° and the low is 10°, the mean is 25°, which when subtracted from 65° will give you the answer — 40 Degree Days for that day. The chart below shows actually how much colder the weather, as measured in Degree Days, has been this fall. It has been over 26% colder than normal for these three months (September, October and November), and over 47% colder than the same period last year.

The weather affects your

Month	Degree Days*			% 1976/1975
	Normal	1975	1976	
September	126	194	173	11% Warmer
October	398	365	538	47% Colder
November	735	525	879	67% Colder
Total	1259	1084	1590	47% Colder

* These are the Degree Days in the actual calendar months. Your monthly bill probably will not correspond to the calendar month so it may include more or less Degree Days depending on the dates it covers.

bill and so does the cost for each unit of energy. RG&E's base rates for gas and electricity increased in April, 1976, following lengthy proceedings held by the New York State Public Service Commission. There have also been increases in the purchased gas and electric fuel cost adjustments to the rates and they have also raised your bill.

Gas and Fuel Cost Adjustments

The cost of gas which RG&E buys from its supplier varies from month-to-month depending on the supplier's costs. Most of this total cost is included in the base rate for gas service. But since the price of

gas to RG&E changes frequently, the gas cost adjustment allows passing on the additional costs above or the savings below the base cost of gas directly to consumers in proportion to the amount of their use. The cost of gas has increased significantly and is expected to continue to go up due to inflationary pressures and the higher wellhead prices for new gas discoveries. The change in the cost of fuel RG&E uses to generate electricity is also passed on to you in a similar way. The revenue from these adjustments is not profit, but rather a way to cope with the constantly changing costs of gas and fuel over which RG&E has little control. The dollar amounts of these adjustments are shown as separate items on your bill and are also included in your total bill.

The increase in rates, plus the increase in the adjustment amounts, should result in a December bill which is about 20% higher than last December's for the same amount of gas for a typical gas heating customer and about 10% higher for the same amount of electricity. If you use more energy than you did last year because of the colder weather, your bills will be that much higher.

RG&E will gladly 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 the Main Office at this address, or our other downtown offices at 28 Genesee Street (Bulls' Head Plaza) or 723 Hudson Avenue. The prolonged cold weather this fall and the cost of gas and other fuels have been significant factors in causing your bills to increase.

In future articles I will discuss ways to help you reduce your energy use so you can keep your bills at a manageable level. You can't do much about the weather, but you can conserve energy through more insulation, storm windows, lowering your thermostat setting,

Holiday Electrical Safety

Lighting, decorating and entertaining for the holidays involves the use of electricity. To make the season safer and more enjoyable for everyone, follow these suggestions:

lights that have the UL seal of approval. Check lights before placing on tree for broken insulation and loose sockets.

2. All cords, plugs, sockets and bulbs used for outdoor lighting should be weatherproof. Make sure all outdoor equipment is grounded to help prevent accidental shock. As an added precaution hang outdoor sockets downward.

3. Do not overload wiring system.

4. Use washer rings (gaskets) on all sockets on indoor light strings to keep decorations (tinsel) from getting into sockets.

5. Electric lights should not be used on metallic trees, use focus spot or flood lights.

6. Unplug holiday lighting before you go to bed or when you leave the house.

7. Small electrical appliances that will be used for entertaining should be placed near outlets to prevent tripping over the cords.

RG&E's "Holiday Safety & Energy Conservation" booklet offers more ideas on electrical safety and conservation. To get yours fill out and return the coupon on this page or call 546-2700, ext. 2225 for your copy. There is no charge or obligation.



Learn how to save energy at holiday time with RG&E's "Holiday Safety & Energy Conservation" booklet.

Consumer Alert!!

Electrical devices are being sold in the Rochester area that are represented as capable of suppressing voltage transients or surges and by so doing effect a considerable reduction in the user's electric consumption and bill. The devices are being sold to residential, commercial and industrial consumers at prices ranging from \$150 to \$750. Typically they consist of simple electronic components mounted in an encapsulating material. Estimates of the value of the components used do not exceed a few dollars.

RG&E tested one of the brands being sold here and was unable to measure any reduction in the amount of electric energy consumed by the appliance used in the test and our test results were not unique. The Edison Electric Institute, in a nationwide poll of electric utilities and independent testing laboratories, was unable to find anyone who had observed any reduction of consumption attributable to these devices. The electric utility industry has, therefore, concluded that claims of their ability to reduce the user's consumption of electricity are completely without merit and the consumer should be advised against justifying an expenditure for them on the basis of any reduction in his electric bills.

RG&E is totally committed to helping the consumer use energy wisely. This page has contained suggestions that we and others have researched and for which the benefits can be proven. We don't want our customers to spend money unnecessarily, in the name of energy conservation.

Microwave Oven Demonstrations Featured at Consumer Center

The energy efficient microwave ovens are on display at RG&E's Consumer Information Center, located on our main floor at 89 East Avenue. These popular appliances can be seen weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and until 9 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

RG&E's Home Service Department has scheduled microwave oven demonstrations throughout the month also. These will be held at the Consumer Information Center from 12 noon to 1:00 p.m. on:

- Monday, December 13
- Tuesday, December 14
- Monday, December 20
- Tuesday, December 21

If you own a microwave oven, or are thinking of buying one, you are invited to attend any of these demonstrations to learn more about its use and care. There is no obligation, but reservations should be made by sending us the coupon noting the date you will be attending. Or call the Home Service Department at 546-2700, ext. 2617.

Give the Gift of Life, Give Blood



A special Holiday Blood Drive will be held at Channel 21 television studio on Monday, December 27. The public is urged to participate during the hours of 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. at 280 State Street. If unable to be there, watch this important event at home.

FILL OUT AND RETURN THIS COUPON TO: CJ-45

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

I would like more information on the following items:

Name _____
Address _____ Phone _____
Town _____ Zip Code _____