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# RG&E consumer news

July 20, 1977



## Should The Gas Furnace Pilot Light Be Shut Off?

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Staff Assistant-Consumer Affairs

The nationwide shortage of natural gas has led several groups to suggest that homeowners shut off their furnace pilot lights in the summer to conserve gas. I will highlight the advantages and disadvantages for you to consider.

### ADVANTAGES

You will save gas by shutting off the pilot light, but the dollar amount of the saving may not be great, depending on the design of the pilot light. Generally, furnaces less than 10-15 years old use approximately 700 cubic feet of gas per month to keep the pilot lighted, at a cost of about \$1.80. Older furnaces normally have differently designed pilots, which can use up to 1,735 cubic feet per month, and cost up to \$4.50.

If you have central air conditioning, you will save more money with air conditioning you pay for electricity to remove the heat which the pilot produces, as well as the gas the pilot consumes. In addition, you should shut off the pilot to prevent the furnace from corroding prematurely from condensation of water vapor, which is one of the products of combustion of gas from the pilot light.

### DISADVANTAGES

If you ask RG&E or a contractor to shut off the pilot and later relight it, there will be charges for those service calls. The service charges probably will cost you more than you would save by eliminating this use of gas, except perhaps if you

## Canning Fruits and Vegetables Demonstrations July 26 & Aug. 2

The Home Service Department of Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation will give demonstrations on canning fruits and vegetables on Tuesday, July 26 at 7 p.m., and on Tuesday, August 2 at 1 p.m. in the basement auditorium at 89 East Avenue.

One of our Home Economists will demonstrate and discuss proper canning procedures. Bring your questions and your friends. There is no charge to attend, but reservations should be made by completing and returning the coupon on this page, or calling 546-2700, ext 2617.

Parking will be available in the company parking lot on Lawn Street for the evening demonstration only.

have central air conditioning.

Widespread acceptance of shutting off pilots could mean delay later in the year when you want the pilot relighted. RG&E has about 148,000 gas heating customers. Simultaneous requests for service calls would mean that some people would have to wait.

... You must observe safety precautions to prevent injuries if you want to shut off and relight the pilot yourself. You should explicitly follow the directions given on the furnace nameplate.

... You would not be able to have heat as long as the pilot remains off. Since Rochester summers usually include a few cool days and nights, this could cause some discomfort.

Furnaces without central air conditioning, in many cases, would stay dry and in better condition with the pilot lights left on.

New devices are available to replace pilot lights on furnaces. RG&E's Consumer Information Center is currently displaying one of them, as mentioned in another article on this page.

## Conserve Energy

Although it may seem hard to remember the bitter cold weather during the hot summer months, none of us can afford to forget the need for energy conservation. There are many ways to conserve energy, even in the summer months. We have a booklet listing "63 Ways to Conserve Electricity and Gas" available without charge. For a copy of this booklet, fill in the coupon on this page and return it to RG&E.

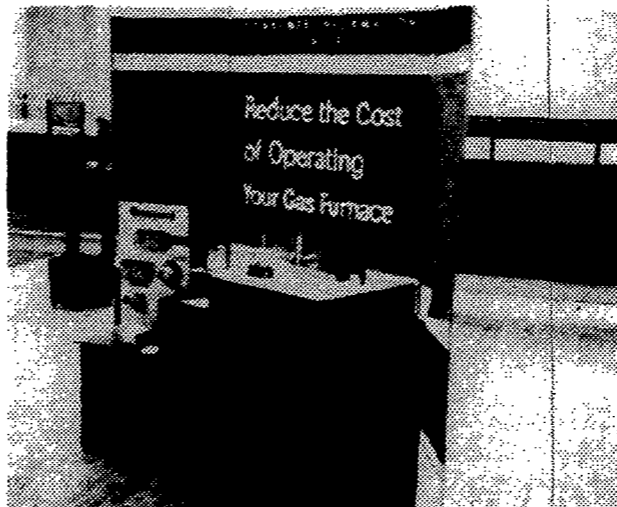
The booklet covers tips for saving energy when using air conditioning, lighting, water heating, cooking, refrigeration and freezers, dishwashers, washing machines, clothes dryers, home entertainment systems and, of course, space heating equipment. It offers suggestions on what you can do now to help prepare your home for next winter. Insulating your home, weather stripping doors and windows, and having your furnace inspected and cleaned by a reputable heating contractor are three excellent things to do to save energy and money.

Send for a copy of "63 Ways to Conserve Electricity and Gas" today, and help conserve energy for tomorrow.

## Energy-Saving Devices on Display at Consumer Information Center

RG&E's Consumer Information Center located on the main floor of our East Avenue office, is featuring

some new products that can help you save valuable energy and will help you keep your gas bill down.



See energy-saving devices at RG&E's Consumer Information Center

## Freezer Efficiency

Now is an excellent time to defrost and clean your freezer. This will improve its operating efficiency, and it will then be ready to start freezing this season's fruits and vegetables.

If your freezer does not automatically self-defrost, complete defrosting should be done once or twice a year. Here are some hints to help you manually defrost your freezer.

Turn temperature control to "off" position and disconnect freezer cord from the electrical outlet. Remove all food and place in another freezer, in a double heavy-duty paper bag, or wrap in newspapers and place in cardboard boxes.

Place a large cookie sheet or trays on bottom of freezer to collect frost. Use a wooden spoon or plastic frost scraper and gently scrape frost off sides of the freezer. Never use a sharp tool which might scratch the surface, as it could damage the refrigerating coils that are just beneath the surface.

To speed defrosting, place pans of hot water on the bottom of the freezer. Do not pour hot water over any surface, however, as this could damage the system. Some units have a drain at the bottom for removing the water. Check your Use and Care Manual for manufacturer's directions. If there is no drain, clean up water and ice as it falls.

Wash shelves and all removable parts. Clean the interior with three tablespoons baking soda dissolved in one quart of warm water, rinse and dry.

After cleaning, replace food in the freezer as quickly as possible. Take this opportunity to reorganize the

way the food is stored, using different shelves for different kinds of foods. Place the oldest food in front where it can be conveniently used. Next, reconnect freezer to the electric appliance outlet and set temperature control at its normal position for zero-degree operation.

In a self-defrosting or No-Frost freezer, the freezer defrosts itself automatically during its normal operation. An evaporator pan located underneath the motor should be checked and cleaned monthly, and more frequently during the summer months.

It is recommended that these freezers also be given a thorough cleaning once or twice a year.

If your freezer is equipped with a finned condenser (refer to Use and Care Manual), the surface should be cleaned with a stiff brush or vacuum cleaner attachment several times a year. Be sure to turn the freezer OFF when cleaning condenser. Check the grill located at the bottom of the freezer for lint and dust. Clean the same as you would for the condenser.

Proper maintenance of your freezer will help to ensure optimum operating efficiency.

For safety reasons ordinary pilot lights burn constantly. Now there are products on the market however, that can be installed on your furnace, safely doing away with the continually burning pilot light. The Consumer Information Center is featuring a gas-conserver pilot system which will allow the pilot to burn only when heat is actually required in the home.

### IF YOU HAVE CENTRAL AIR CONDITIONING

It is especially important that the pilot light be out during the air conditioning season if you have central air conditioning. You will not only conserve the gas which would have been used by the pilot, but you will also save the electricity which would have been used by the air conditioner to remove the heat which would have been created by the pilot. If the pilot is left on during the cooling season while the air conditioner is running, condensation will be created in the furnace causing excessive corrosion.

### CLOCK THERMOSTAT WITH AUTOMATIC SETBACK

Our display also features several models of clock-thermostats with automatic night setback. They are easy to install and require no special wiring. These devices can be set to lower the temperature on winter nights during your usual sleeping hours, or when you are away during the day. Another setting will automatically raise the temperature at the present time before you get up in the morning, or before you are expected to return.

If you wish to find out more about these and the other energy-saving devices on display, stop in to our Consumer Information Center. Or call our Residential Marketing Department at 546-2700, extension 2751 and find out how these energy-saving devices can help you save.

FILL OUT AND RETURN THIS COUPON TO: C-J51  
 Dept. 34 Rochester Gas and Electric  
 89 East Avenue, Rochester, N.Y. 14649  
 546-2700

I would like more information on the following items:

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