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# RG&E consumer news

December 21, 1977



## Does Proper Humidity Save Energy?

By Anne S. Fenstermacher  
Staff Assistant-Consumer Affairs

**Question:** I have been told that controlling humidity in a house can result in energy savings. Is this true?

**Answer:** The major reasons for maintaining the proper level of humidity are for comfort and health; energy saving could result under some conditions, but would be a side benefit.

The air in your house is dry in the winter because as air is heated, its ability to hold moisture increases and its relative humidity decreases. The air absorbs moisture from you, your house and your furnishings, and this could make you somewhat uncomfortable. Humidified air feels warmer than dry air at the same temperature because it reduces the rate of evaporative cooling of the skin. The point about possible energy savings is mentioned because a house that is too dry must be kept warmer than one with the proper humidity level, to give the same comfort. When your thermostat registers 70° for example, you may feel chilly when the air is dry, so you may turn the thermostat up higher than necessary. Conversely, having the proper humidity level should enable you to set your thermostat back as much as two degrees farther than you would in a dry house and still be just as comfortable.

Under some conditions you could realize some energy savings by installing a power humidifier to your heating system or by using a portable appliance-type humidifier. But heat is required to evaporate moisture into the air and this will reduce some of the savings that result from a lower thermostat setting. If the house is of loose construction with no

weatherstripping or storm windows or storm doors, the amount of heat required for evaporating the moisture required to maintain 35% relative humidity might even be greater than the amount that would have been saved. With loose construction a greater amount of air moves in and out of the house. In winter the cold outside air is very dry. As it moves inside it reduces the relative humidity in the house, making it necessary to add more moisture continually.

A relative humidity level of 30-35% is recommended for comfort in most winter conditions as the average winter temperature in Rochester is about 35°. Higher humidity, up to 45%, would be more comfortable but would cause condensation on the windows or other cold surfaces when it is very cold outside. You can buy a small instrument called a humidiguide to give you an approximate idea of your home's humidity level. Humidiguides are available at hardware and department stores. If you have questions about your own situation, fill out and send in the coupon on this page.

### Recommended Maximum Humidity Levels

This chart shows the recommended maximum humidity levels at various winter temperatures. The humidity level should be lowered as the temperature drops in order to reduce condensation inside the house.

Outside Temperature	Recommended Interior Relative Humidity
+ 20° and above	35%
+ 10°	30%
0°	25%
- 10°	20%
- 20°	15%

## RG&E To Stop Selling Appliances

Francis E. Drake, Jr., Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation announced that as of December 31, 1977, the Company will no longer sell home appliances.

Since the early 1900's, it has been the Company's policy to sell appliances of high quality and to introduce new products with energy-efficient features. Over the years RG&E was instrumental in introducing such appliances as: the automatic water heater, portable dishwasher, dehumidifier and clothes dryer to the Rochester area.

In 1971 the New York State Public Service Commission restricted RG&E from promoting the sale of appliances through advertising. This restriction reduced sales volumes which caused an adverse impact on the Company's earnings. Established customer confidence and satisfaction enabled the department to exist the near seven years without active promotion.

The recent emphasis on "consumerism" and adequate supply of energy somewhat altered merchandising priorities. While RG&E has always been consumer oriented, we have attempted to become even more aware of the needs of our customers and provide them with better service.

Because we feel our customers have a right to be informed, RG&E will continue to offer advice and information on energy conservation with appliances. Booklets like, "How to Avoid Unnecessary Service Calls," and "Buying Guides for Major Appliances" will still be available.

RG&E will continue to service appliances purchased from the Company for the duration of their warranties and service contracts.

## Holiday Hours

In observance of the holidays, all Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation offices will be closed on:

- Friday afternoon, December 23
- Monday, December 26
- Friday afternoon, December 30
- Monday, January 2

The Bulls' Head and Hudson Avenue offices will be open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Friday, December 23 and

Friday, December 30.

Emergency service is always available, 24 hours a day, by calling 546-1100 (or 454-1133) in the Rochester area. Emergency numbers for our District offices are: Enterprise 9149 in the Canandaigua/Finger Lakes District; Enterprise 9188 in the Genesee Valley District; and Enterprise 9429 in the Lake Shore District. For customers outside Rochester, please consult your local telephone directory.

## Degree Days Measure Weather

Last year's heating season was one of the coldest in our Nation's history. The result was higher heating bills, and an increasing awareness of the need for energy conservation and consciousness.

RG&E keeps track of weather conditions by using a "Degree Day" system. This system indicates the relative coldness of a period of time. Last year we ran a degree day chart in the Consumer News page to help our customers understand their rising fuel

bills. Due to the interest received, we will continue to run a monthly chart for this heating season based on the degree day system.

Degree days are figured by subtracting the mean temperature (which is the average of the high and low temperatures) from 65°. 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 40 degree days for that day.

### DEGREE DAYS\*

Month	Normal	1977-78 Season	% Difference From Normal
September	161	166	3% Colder
October	415	477	15% Colder
November	735	634	14% Warmer
Season to Nov. 30	1294	1277	1% Warmer

\*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 period it covers.

**RG&E's  
BROOKWOOD  
SCIENCE  
INFORMATION  
CENTER  
will be  
CLOSED**

Sunday, December 25, 1977  
Monday, December 26, 1977  
and  
Sunday, January 1, 1978  
Monday, January 2, 1978

**FILL OUT AND RETURN THIS COUPON TO:** CJ-55  
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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Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Town \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

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