



ENERGY SPOTLIGHT®

December 2007

Enjoy winter... choose a convenient bill payment option

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Tired of writing checks? Want to simplify paying your winter gas bills? Choose one of our convenient payment options and have more time for important matters...like sledding, building snowmen and making snow angels.

Get with the Plan

The Nicor Gas Budget Plan will spread your payments throughout the year to help you avoid negative impacts to your budget during the heating season.

The way the plan works is that we calculate your monthly payment by estimating your gas use and gas prices for the next 12 months. We also take into account your current account balance. This total is then divided by 12 to arrive at your monthly Budget Plan payment.

During the summer months, your Budget Plan payment will typically be higher than your actual bill. Paying this higher amount allows you to build up a credit balance, which is then used to offset higher winter bills.

Periodically we will reevaluate your Budget Plan payment amount. We do this to determine if your payment amount is in line with your actual usage and future gas costs. If an adjustment is needed (either up or down), it is automatically made and will appear on your next bill statement. To sign up for the plan, visit nicorgas.com/myaccount.

Try a hassle-free payment option

Auto Payment

Stop writing checks to Nicor Gas. With Auto Payment, your monthly bill is electronically withdrawn, at no charge, from your checking or savings account on your due date.

CheckFree®

Want to "go paperless"? CheckFree is a free service that allows you to view your bill online and pay directly from your bank account at a time that's convenient for you. Bills and receipts can be downloaded for your records. After you enroll, you'll receive one more paper bill.

NCO® e-Payments

Pay your Nicor Gas bill online using a credit or debit card. NCO Financial Systems, Inc. charges a nominal convenience fee per transaction.

Ask Your Banker

Additionally, most banks offer free online payment services, giving you the option to pay your Nicor Gas bill. We recommend that you check your bank's Web site to determine if they provide this service.

For details on our payment plans, visit nicorgas.com and click on "Bill Payment Information."

Last Chance for Energy Bill Tax Credits

Under the Energy Policy Act of 2005, tax credits are available for many types of home improvements including adding insulation, replacement windows and certain high efficiency heating and cooling equipment. The maximum amount of homeowner credit for all improvements combined is \$500. This tax credit applies to improvements made to your primary residence from January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2007. For more information, visit energystar.gov and click on "Tax Credits Under the Energy Bill."



12 tips to help your household use energy wisely



By following these simple tips you can maximize your home's energy efficiency and minimize your winter heating bills:

1. Typically called a "clean and check," have your furnace serviced annually by a qualified contractor and be sure to change the filter monthly during the winter.
2. Install a programmable thermostat and set it to follow your schedule. Set it lower while you're at work or sleeping and increase the temperature during your active hours at home. If you go on vacation, set it to 55 degrees to keep your heating expenses down while protecting your pipes from freezing.
3. Set your thermostat to your personal comfort level. We recommend putting on a sweater and "dialing down" to between 65 and 68 degrees. Homes with infants, ill or elderly persons should have a warmer environment.
4. Consider purchasing a humidifier, either on your furnace or as a separate unit. A humidifier moistens the air, which feels warmer than dry air, so you can lower your thermostat.
5. Reduce the amount of air (and energy dollars) escaping your home. Use caulking, sealant or weather stripping to weatherize all seams, cracks and openings around windows, doors and baseboards, as well as the small openings around television cables, dryer vents and plumbing pipes.
6. When replacing windows, specify double-paned glass with a low U-value (lower than .35) to maximize insulating qualities.
7. Set your water heater temperature to 120 degrees and install water-saving shower heads to reduce your hot water use by as much as 50%. Operate your dishwasher, washing machine and clothes dryer with full loads only.
8. Fix leaky faucets. One drip can waste 250 gallons of water a month, which translates to 3,000 gallons of wasted water annually.
9. Close your fireplace damper when it isn't being used. Leaving it open is like leaving a 48-inch window open, since it allows warm air to go right up the chimney.
10. Close vents and doors in unused rooms.
11. Use kitchen, bath and other ventilating fans sparingly in cold weather. In just one hour, these fans can blow away a houseful of warm air.
12. On windows that face the sun, leave draperies open during the day. At night, close drapes to help keep heat inside. Consider installing heavy draperies on large windows.

Want more tips? Visit nicorgas.com/gascost and download our "Keeping the Warmth In and the Cold Out" booklet with over 60 energy-saving tips that apply to every room in your home. Or call us at 1 888 Nicor4u and we'll send you a copy.

America is Going Green

In 2006, Americans avoided greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those from 25 million automobiles, while saving more than \$14 billion on their energy bills by using ENERGY STAR®-rated products. Americans also saved a significant amount of energy in 2006—170 billion kilowatt hours (kWh)—or almost five percent of the total 2006 electricity demand.

Source: "Energy Star and Other Climate Protection Partnerships 2006 Annual Report"



December Natural Gas Cost

Every month, Nicor Gas files a gas supply charge with the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC). It is the price customers pay for gas purchased from Nicor Gas during that month. As a regulated utility, Nicor Gas does not profit from the sale of natural gas. The price we pay for gas is passed through to our customers without markup. Visit nicorgas.com/gascost to use our "Bill Planning Guide" to get an idea of what your next month's bill might be.

* At press time, this was the price Nicor Gas filed with the ICC. Under ICC rules, the price may be changed up until the first of the month in which it is effective.



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