

# At Your Service



The logo for Nicor Gas, featuring the word "nicor" in a lowercase, serif font with a blue dot above the "i", and "G A S" in a smaller, uppercase, sans-serif font below it.

A guide to your  
Nicor Gas account

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Nicor Gas' responsibilities  
Your responsibilities

**Please keep this guide handy  
for future reference**

**W**hether you're enjoying the benefits of clean-burning natural gas in your home or counting on its reliability and value to operate your business effectively, you can be assured that Nicor Gas is here to meet your energy needs.

Since 1954, Nicor Gas has been a part of northern Illinois, growing from a small utility into one of the largest natural gas distribution companies in the country, now serving over two million customers in more than 640 communities.

While our number one priority is the safe and dependable delivery of natural gas, we also have a responsibility to contribute to the well-being and progress of northern Illinois. To that end, Nicor Gas actively supports several charitable, educational and environmental organizations, and our employees contribute both their time and money to the communities where they live and work. As a company, we are proud to serve your community – as your utility and your neighbor.

*Welcome to Nicor Gas.*

*We're glad you're our customer.*



[nicorgas.com](http://nicorgas.com)



# Welcome to Nicor Gas!

We offer several ways to contact us — 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Choose the method that's most convenient for you.

Phone: 1 888 Nicor4u (1 888 642-6748)  
TDD Phone: 1 800 942-3727  
Web: nicorgas.com  
E-mail: custser@nicor.com  
Mail: P.O. Box 416  
Aurora, IL 60568-0001

## When to contact us

### Emergency situations

Call us immediately if:

-  You smell natural gas (exception: a faint odor near an appliance that goes away after the pilot is lit)
-  You hear natural gas leaking (hissing sound)
-  Your gas service is suddenly interrupted

**Smell:** Nicor Gas adds a distinctive odor to natural gas as a way to alert you to a gas leak. To help you recognize this odor – which many people equate to that of rotten eggs – a scratch 'n sniff sample is included with this brochure.

A faint gas odor near an appliance may indicate that the pilot light has gone out. If the appliance has a pilot light and the odor persists after relighting, exit immediately, leaving doors and windows open as you exit. Do not open windows if they're not already open. Do not use your telephone or cell phone, operate any appliance, light a match or turn light switches on or off. Call Nicor Gas from a neighboring location.

**Sound:** If you hear a blowing or hissing sound coming from a building that uses natural gas, exit immediately, leaving doors and windows open as you exit. Do not open windows if they're not already open. Do not use your telephone or cell phone, operate any appliance, light a match or turn light switches on or off. Call Nicor Gas from a neighboring location.

**Sight:** If you see discolored vegetation, blowing dirt or bubbling water in the area of a buried natural gas pipeline, this could indicate a natural gas leak. Call Nicor Gas or your local fire department and keep people away from the suspect area.

## Non-emergency situations

We encourage you to visit [nicorgas.com](http://nicorgas.com), where you can access your account information, pay your gas bill and find other useful information about your gas service.

Our Customer Care Center representatives are available to answer questions about your Nicor Gas bill and/or account, explain bill payment options or take a payment over the phone.

**Helpful tip:** *We receive a high number of calls on Monday mornings. To minimize the time you are on hold, consider calling on Monday afternoon or on another day during the week. A return call option is available during busy times.*

## Moving Information

Congratulations! Here are a few things to keep in mind as you get settled into your new home.

You can expect your first Nicor Gas bill to arrive within 15 to 60 days of the date we turned on your service. During the summer months (June through September) you will receive a bill every other month. To find out your meter read and billing schedule for the year, just visit [nicorgas.com](http://nicorgas.com) and click on "My Account." You will need your phone number and last four digits of your social security number.

If you brought any appliances from your former residence or purchased a home or business that is more than 20 years old, we recommend you have your appliance connectors inspected. Uncoated brass connectors are potentially dangerous. Find out more on page 20.

Nicor Gas offers payment plans and options including budget billing and electronic funds transfer. You may pay over the phone, online, by U.S. mail or in person at a pay agent (see pages 14 -15). We also offer several ways to obtain financial assistance, should you ever need it. Just read on for more information, log on to [nicorgas.com](http://nicorgas.com) or call us at 1 888 Nicor4u.

We need full access to your meter in order to provide you with accurate meter readings. We read your meter every other month and estimate the reading in opposite months. Find out when we will read your meter by visiting the "My Account" section of [nicorgas.com](http://nicorgas.com). If you have outdoor pets, please let us know so we can make note of it on your account and inform our meter readers before they approach your property. Also, if you have a fence, if possible leave the gate unlocked on the day of your scheduled read. For more information, refer to page 19 of this guide.

## The next time you move

Call us before you move, and we will arrange to have the natural gas service at your current address taken out of your name. If you will be moving within the Nicor Gas service territory, we can also arrange for gas service at your new address. Or, if you move out of our service territory, just let us know where to send your final gas bill or we can take your final payment at that time.

# Understanding your bill

At Nicor Gas, we work hard to ensure you are billed accurately for the amount of gas you use each month. If you have a question regarding your bill, begin by taking your own meter reading and comparing it with the reading on your gas bill. If you still have questions, call us for more information.



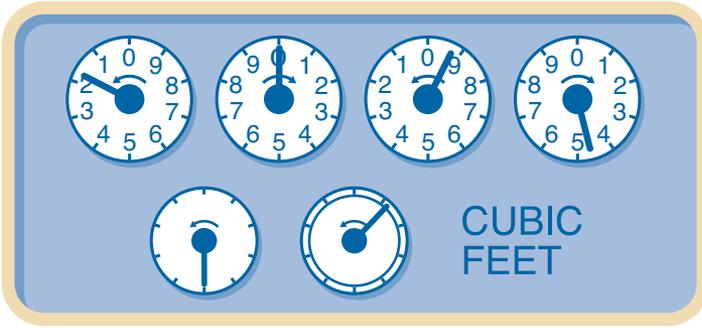
## Actual versus estimated readings

Nicor Gas takes an *actual* read of your meter every other month. On alternate months, we record an *estimated* read based on the property's previous gas use, number of days covered by the bill, weather during the billing timeframe and your "base use" – the volume of gas you use during the summer for non-heating purposes. Using this information, we are able to estimate your reading as close as possible to actual consumption. Then, any variance in the estimated read is corrected in your next bill – so you can be assured you only pay for the gas you use.

Nevertheless, we understand that some customers do not want estimated meter readings. So we offer all customers the option to submit an actual meter read. You can do this quickly and easily through the "My Account" section of [nicorgas.com](http://nicorgas.com). For your convenience, the dates of your actual and estimated meter readings for the next 12 months are also available by visiting the "My Account" section at [nicorgas.com](http://nicorgas.com). If you do not have Internet access, you can call 1 888 Nicor4u with your meter read. An automated phone system is available 24 hours a day/7 days a week to automatically record your read.

## How to read your meter

Your gas meter measures the amount of gas flowing through it and then records the flow in the numbers on the dials. Most gas meters have six dials on the front panel. However, only the four dials numbered 0 through 9 are used for meter readings. To take a reading, remember these guidelines:



*Sample Reading: 1994*

1. Read the numbers for each dial going from **right to left**.
2. Always read the numbers in the direction the arrow on the dial is pointing.
3. When a dial pointer is between two numbers, always record the number the pointer just passed.
4. If a pointer is directly on a number, check the dial immediately to the right. The pointer on the right dial must have reached or passed zero (be sure to read in the direction of the arrow) for you to record the number the pointer will hit next on the left dial. If the pointer on the right dial has not passed zero, write in the number the pointer just passed from the left dial.

Once you have your reading, you can submit it online by visiting the "My Account" section of [nicorgas.com](http://nicorgas.com) or phone in your reading to Nicor Gas' automated phone system at 1 888 Nicor4u.

## Terms on your bill

### 1 Meter Reading

Your gas bill is based on several elements including the amount of natural gas used during your billing period. Your use is shown as the difference between the current and previous meter readings.

**Current Reading:** This represents the current reading of your gas meter. There will be a notation on this line indicating one of three methods of meter reading:

- Actual meter reading – your meter was read by a Nicor Gas meter reader.
- Customer reading – you reported your meter reading to us.
- Estimated meter reading – Nicor Gas estimated your reading based on your previous use and the current weather. Every other month, we estimate most of our customers' meter readings. On your next bill, any difference from your actual use is automatically corrected when we take an actual meter reading.
- Previous reading: The reading of your gas meter in the last reading period.

**Difference:** The difference between the previous reading and the current reading.

**Conversion to Therms:** For billing, your natural gas use is converted from cubic feet to therms, the basic unit for measuring the amount of natural gas you use. To determine the amount of therms, we multiply your use by the BTU factor. The BTU factor gives the actual heat value of the gas we supply. The BTU factor may vary from month to month; refer to your bill for the actual BTU factor that is being used.

### 2 Delivery Charges

These charges cover our fixed and variable operating and distribution costs. Part of these charges varies from month to month based on the amount of natural gas you use. Nicor Gas has the lowest delivery charges in the state of Illinois.

**Monthly Customer Charge:** A minimum charge for most customers and is the same each month – even if you do not use natural gas that month.

**Therm Usage/ Delivery Charges:** These charges cover our fixed and variable operating and distribution costs. A portion of these charges varies from month to month based on the amount of natural gas you use. There are price variations at certain levels of therm usage.

Volumetric Delivery Charge	\$10.21
First 20 therms	20 @ \$.2012 = \$4.02
21-50 therms	30 @ \$.1117 = \$3.35
Over 50 therms	75.98 @ \$.0374 = \$2.84

**Environmental Recovery Cost:** This charge covers our costs for the environmental monitoring and possible clean-up of former manufactured gas plants in our service territory. This charge changes periodically. Nicor Gas does not profit from these charges.

### Rate 4 Delivery Charges (for business customers)

Business customers who use natural gas for non-heating applications, space heating and/or cooling are on our General Service Rate 4. Rate 4 customers will see different rates in the Delivery Charges section of their bills.

**Monthly Customer Charge:** A minimum charge for most customers and is the same each month – even if you do not use natural gas that month. For Rate 4 business customers, this charge is based on your meter



Nicor Gas  
P.O. Box 2020  
Aurora, IL 60507-2020  
www.nicorgas.com

# 1 888 NICOR 4U

( 6 4 2 - 6 7 4 8 )

Service For:  
**JOHN DOE**  
308 ENERGY ST.  
ANYTOWN

Account: 1-23-45-6789 1  
Meter Number 3799621  
Residential-Space Heat

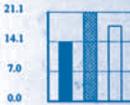
### Energy Profile

Average Daily Cost  
2004 \$0.71

Average Daily Therms  
2004 0.50  
2003 0.59

Total Degree Days  
2004 0  
2003 0

### Monthly Therm Usage



This Month  
 Last Month  
 This Month Last Year

**WARNING:**  
Certain older gas  
appliance  
connectors could be  
dangerous. Do not  
attempt to check  
them yourself. See  
important safety  
information on the  
back of this bill or  
visit nicorgas.com  
for more  
information.

### Payment Information

Previous acct. balance 46.32  
7/15 Paymt rec'd, thank you -26.54  
8/17 Corrected billing -19.78

### Meter Reading 1

Current: 6994 Customer Read - August 5, 2004  
Previous: 6990 Actual Meter Reading - July 8, 2004  
Difference: 14 (28 days)  
Conversion to Therms: 14 x 1.009 BTU Factor = 14.12 Therms

### Delivery Charges 2

Monthly Customer Charge 14.12 @ 2012 = 6.45  
Environmental Recovery Cost 14.12 @ .0073 = .10

### Natural Gas Cost 3

14.12 Therms x .7100 \$10.03

### Taxes 4

State Revenue 14.12 @ .024 = .34  
Utility Fund Tax 19.42 @ .10% = .02

\$3.6

### Tot curnt bill-corrected

**\$19.78**

Our Budget Plan can even out the seasonal highs and lows of your gas bill by spreading your payments over 12 months. Your recommended Budget Plan amount is \$109.00. To sign up, pay this amount with your next bill, visit nicorgas.com or call 1 888 Nicor4u (1 888 642-6748). Keeping your account current will help you maintain a good credit rating as it is Nicor's policy to report significant late payments to a credit bureau.

Thank you for your prompt payment record. We are pleased to have you as our customer.

### Total Amount Due 5

Date of issue August 17, 2004

**\$19.78**



Please detach and return with your payment

To avoid late pay charge, pay bill by 09/07/04

Due by: 9/07/04

**\$19.78**

To sign up for Budget Plan  
Pay \$109.00 and check here \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate amount added for Sharing:

\$2  \$5  \$10  \$25

Account: 1-23-45-6789 1

JOHN DOE  
308 ENERGY ST.  
ANYTOWN IL 54321-4539



PO BOX 416  
AURORA IL 60568-0001



01 23 45 6789 1 0000019786 0000019786 0

This is a sample of a basic residential Nicor Gas bill and a description of its main sections. A complete explanation of each line item appears on the back of your monthly bill.



size and your potential maximum hourly use of natural gas in cubic feet per hour (cfh). Most business customers are in the “less than 1,000 cfh” category. If you have any questions, call 1 888 Nicor4u.

Less than 1,000 cfh	\$16.00
1,000 cfh to 10,000 cfh	\$54.50
More than 10,000 cfh	\$104.50

**Volumetric Delivery Charges:** A portion of these charges varies from month to month based on the amount of natural gas you use. There are price variations at certain levels of therm usage.

First 150 therms @	\$.1330
151-5,000 therms @	\$.0683
Over 5,000 therms @	\$.0377

**Environmental Recovery Cost:** This charge covers our costs for the environmental monitoring and possible clean-up of former manufactured gas plants in our service territory. This charge changes periodically. Nicor Gas does not profit from these charges.

### ③ Natural Gas Cost

This is calculated by multiplying your use by the average cost per therm we pay our suppliers for the natural gas we deliver to your home. This cost varies monthly because of changes in the commodity price we pay and changes in your natural gas use. As a regulated utility, Nicor Gas does not profit from gas costs; we pass the cost on to you without mark-up. The monthly gas cost is filed with the Illinois Commerce Commission.

### ④ Taxes

**State Revenue Tax:** The State Revenue tax is mandated by the State of Illinois and is not a sales tax. It can be calculated either of two ways, and the lower amount is used:

- a) Five percent of the subtotal of Delivery Charges and Natural Gas Cost.
- b) Multiplying the number of therms used by \$0.024.

**State Use Tax:** This tax is imposed on natural gas purchased outside of Illinois for use or consumption in Illinois. It is calculated by multiplying the number of therms used by \$0.024.

**Utility Fund Tax:** This tax funds the Illinois Commerce Commission, which regulates all Illinois utilities. It is mandated by the State of Illinois. It is 0.1 percent of the subtotal of Delivery Charges and Natural Gas Cost.

**Municipal Utility Tax:** Some municipalities charge this tax based on utility revenue. It is authorized by Section 8-11-2 of the Illinois Municipal Code and is applied according to local municipality's ordinance.

**Gas Use Tax:** Some municipalities charge this tax based on your gas use.

### ⑤ Total Amount Due

**This is the amount of your current bill** – the total of Delivery Charges, Natural Gas Cost and Taxes.

Your bill stub will show the total amount due and the date that payment is due.

**Budget Plan:** Residential and small business customers can sign up for the Nicor Gas Budget Plan, which allows you to spread your payments over a 12-month period. For more information, please refer to page 9.

Additional rates are available for large business customers and for customers who would like Nicor Gas to transport natural gas purchased from another supplier.

## *Stay on track with the Budget Plan*

With the Budget Plan\*, you can spread out your natural gas bill payments over a 12-month period. You will earn a finance credit during the months that your account carries a credit balance. If your account balance is more than the payments you've made, you will incur a finance charge.

Every few months, we will reevaluate your Budget Plan amount to determine if it is in line with your account balance, expected 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. If your payment is withdrawn from your bank account through electronic funds transfer, any adjustments to your Budget Plan amount will appear on your next bank statement.

At the end of your 12-month Budget Plan period, we will calculate the difference between your actual gas bill charges and the total amount you have paid. We will then bill you for any additional amount owed so you begin the next 12-month period with a zero balance. If you've built up a credit balance, we'll apply that credit toward the next year's monthly payments.

Most Budget Plan customers receive bi-monthly bills year round.

To enroll, just locate the Budget Plan information on your bill stub and include payment for the Budget Plan amount shown. Or, sign up online by visiting the "My Account" section of [nicorgas.com](http://nicorgas.com).

**Reminder:** *Paying each monthly Budget Plan payment on time can help you maintain a good credit rating, as it is our policy to report payment history to a credit bureau.*

\* Business customers must have an average monthly bill less than \$4,000 to be eligible for the Budget Plan.





## 4 Payment Stub

Most Budget Plan customers are billed bi-monthly and will receive two payment stubs and two payment envelopes in each bill. Each payment stub has a due date indicated above the amount due, so you can pay monthly even though you receive a bill every other month. Your monthly payment will differ from your account balance, as the account balance is the cumulative status of your account.

## 5 Bi-Monthly Billing Customers

Bi-monthly billing customers will see two entries under each category of your bill indicating the month in which the charges apply.



Nicol Gas  
P.O. Box 2020  
Aurora, IL 60507-2020  
www.nicorgas.com

# 1 888 NICOR 4U

( 6 4 2 - 6 7 4 8 )

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**JOHN DOE**

**Taxes**

July 2 to August 1

State Revenue Tax	32.28 @ .024 =	.77
Utility Fund Tax	33.25 @ .10 % =	.04
Municipal Tax	33.25 @ 3.13% =	1.02

August 2 to August 31

State Revenue Tax	30.27 @ .024 =	.73
Utility Fund Tax	31.52 @ .10 % =	.03
Municipal Tax	31.52 @ 3.13% =	1.02

Account: 1-23-45-6789 1  
Meter Number 3546680  
Residential-Space Heat

(Page 2 of 2)

**\$5.01**

**Two Month Total** \$71.78

Periodically, we must recalculate your monthly Budget Plan payment based on your forecasted bills and current account balance. As a result, your new minimum monthly amount is \$79.00. To have this amount automatically withdrawn from your bank account each month, call 1 888 Nicor4u or visit nicorgas.com. Keeping your account current can help you maintain a good credit rating as it is Nicor's policy to report significant late payments to a credit bureau.

Our records indicate that we have not been able to read your meter for some time now. It is important that we periodically read your meter to ensure proper billing. Please contact us as soon as possible to schedule an appointment. Thank you.

**Account Balance** \$160.51cr  
Date of Issue September 1, 2004

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**WARNING:**  
Certain older gas appliance connectors could be dangerous. Do not attempt to check them yourself. See important safety information on the back of this bill or visit nicorgas.com for more information.

Please detach and return with your payment

Die by: 10/22/04

**\$79.00**

Your monthly budget payment is **\$79.00**

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**JOHN DOE**  
308 ENERGY ST.  
ANYTOWN IL 54321-2736



Indicate amount added for Shering:  
 \$2  \$5  \$10  \$25

Account: 1-23-45-6789 1

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PO BOX 416  
AURORA IL 60568-0001



01 23 45 6789 1 0000079004 0000079004 1

Page 2



## Choosing your natural gas supplier



All Nicor Gas residential and business customers are eligible to participate in Customer Select®, a program that allows you to choose your natural gas supplier. With Customer Select, you decide what services, products and pricing options you will get – which may result in savings to you.

Regardless of the supplier you choose, Nicor Gas continues to respond to emergencies, deliver the gas and read your meter, just as we always have. Customer Select is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, Nicor Gas will continue to be your gas supplier.

*CustomerSelect* 

If you sign up for Customer Select, the source of your bill may change. For example, you could:

- receive a bill from Nicor Gas (similar to the sample in this section) that includes your Customer Select supplier's charges,
- receive a bill from your supplier that includes Nicor Gas' charges for the delivery of your natural gas, or
- receive separate bills from your supplier and Nicor Gas.



If you are a Customer Select participant and have a question regarding the gas cost charges on your bill, please call your supplier directly. If you aren't able to resolve the issue with your supplier or have a natural gas emergency, call Nicor Gas.

To learn more about Customer Select and view a list of participating suppliers, visit the Customer Select section of [nicorgas.com](https://www.nicorgas.com). You must contact the supplier directly to sign up. When you're ready to enroll you will need to share your account number and meter number with the supplier.

You can change suppliers or resume service with Nicor Gas at any time. However, you may be subject to penalties or exit fees from your supplier, depending on the terms of your contract.

# My account

## “My Account” online

For quick and easy anytime access to your Nicor Gas account information, visit the “My Account” section at nicorgas.com. At the click of a mouse, you can:

- Pay your bill
- View your account information and gas usage history
- Find a payment center
- Sign up for e-mail reminders
- Submit a meter read
- Sign up for the Budget Plan, Auto Payment and Deferred Payment Arrangements

Residential customer bills are due 21 days after they are issued. Business customer bills are due 14 days after they are issued.

During the summer, for many customers we combine four residential bills into two to help keep administrative costs down. Most Budget Plan customers receive bi-monthly bills year round.

## How to make a payment

At Nicor Gas, we offer a number of convenient options for bill payment.

### By mail

Send your check or money order in the return envelope along with your payment stub included with your bill to:

**Nicor Gas**  
**P.O. Box 416**  
**Aurora, IL 60568-0001**

### Auto Payment

With Auto Payment, your bill payment can be automatically deducted from your bank account via an electronic funds transfer at no additional charge to you. To sign up, visit the “My Account” section of nicorgas.com. Or, call 1 888 Nicor4u and follow the voice prompts to obtain an enrollment form.

### Online bill payment

Pay your gas bill online by visiting the “My Account” section of nicorgas.com. There are several options available including payment by credit card or bank account. You can also choose to receive an electronic version of your bill when paying by bank account. A fee may be charged by the payment vendor.

## By phone

Pay your gas bill using a credit card or by a bank withdrawal. Just call us at 1 888 Nicor4u from a touch-tone phone (a fee is charged by the payment vendor).

## In person

You may pay your gas bill at one of the businesses that accept Nicor payments located throughout our service territory (a fee may be charged by the payment vendor). For the location nearest you, visit the “My Account” section of [nicorgas.com](http://nicorgas.com) or call us.

For more information on any of these payment options, visit the “Bill Payment Information” section of [nicorgas.com](http://nicorgas.com).

### *Late payments*

If you can't pay your bill on time, call us as soon as possible. We allow one late payment each year (between July 1 and June 30) without penalty. However, if you make two or more late payments during a 12-month period, a late payment charge of 1 1/2 percent per month will be assessed on the unpaid balance and will appear on your next bill.

### *Deferred Payment Arrangements (DPA)*

If you're behind on your natural gas payments, you may be eligible for DPA. A down payment is required and the remainder of your balance will be spread out over four months and then added to your current monthly balance. To sign up or check eligibility, visit the “My Account” section of [nicorgas.com](http://nicorgas.com) or call us.

### *Returned checks*

Returned checks or electronic file transfers refused due to insufficient funds will be assessed a \$16 charge, which will appear on your next bill. If we receive multiple returned checks for one account, we may require cash payment only for a period of time.

### *Credit information*

When you request natural gas service to be turned on in your name, you will be asked to supply us with credit information. Nicor Gas can help you establish a good credit rating if you stay current on your natural gas bills, as it our company's policy to report payment history to a credit bureau.

## Security deposits

Nicor Gas will request a cash security deposit for any of the following reasons:

- Failure to pay a final bill from a prior address
- Service disconnection for nonpayment
- Meter tampering
- No previous billing relationship with Nicor Gas and refusal to supply credit information

- History of late bill payments:
  - Residential customers who have four late payments in any 12-month period (during the first two years of service)
  - Business customers who have four late payments within a 12-month period (for the first two years) or six late payments within any 12-month period (after the first two years)

Security deposits are returned after 12 months of on-time payments. Interest is paid on deposits refunded.

## **Earned credit**

You can earn interest or finance credit when your account is in a credit position. Earned credit is based on the average rates of 13-week U.S. Treasury bills.

## **Unresolved credit and collection problems**

If you have an unresolved credit or collection problem, please call Nicor Gas at 1 888 642-6748 and ask for a supervisor. If the problem remains unresolved, you may submit a complaint to the Illinois Commerce Commission (see p. 27).

## ***Service suspension***

Disconnection of your natural gas service will only occur as a last resort for one of the following reasons:

- Unauthorized use of natural gas, including meter tampering
- Non-payment of utility bills
- Refusal to make a security deposit or increase a deposit
- Default on a payment arrangement
- Refusal to allow Nicor Gas employees access to our equipment for meter reading, routine maintenance or repair activities
- Non-compliance with Illinois Commerce Commission rules

## **If you have received a disconnect notice**

A disconnect notice requires immediate action to prevent interruption of service. However, you do have options.

- See if you qualify for a payment arrangement. Call us or visit the “My Account” section of nicorgas.com to determine eligibility for payment arrangements.
- See if you qualify for financial assistance. LIHEAP and Nicor’s Sharing Program offer assistance to those in need. Refer to page 17 for details.

## **Illness and termination of service**

If any permanent resident in your home has an existing serious illness, termination of your natural gas service may be delayed for 30 days. Call us for more information.

## **Third Party Notification**

Have a friend or family member help you stay connected through Third Party Notification. You can arrange for a third party to receive your Nicor Gas bill on your behalf. The third party can be a relative, friend, neighbor or professional who is helping you manage your affairs. And, you can change or drop Third Party Notification at any time. Call us for more information.

## **Reconnection**

While Nicor Gas allows one free reconnection per year, the Illinois Commerce Commission authorizes us to charge a restoration fee for reconnecting service after disconnection due to non-payment of bills or other just cause. If disconnection is due to non-payment, full payment of the outstanding balance plus a security deposit must be made before reconnection is authorized.

### ***Financial assistance***

There are a number of federal, state and local assistance programs that may be able to help you pay your natural gas bill. We've included information on a few of these options below. For more information, please visit [nicorgas.com](http://nicorgas.com).

## **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)**

LIHEAP provides qualifying residential households with monetary relief once per year to be used for energy bills. It is a government-funded program administered by the Illinois Office of Energy Assistance. To qualify, your monthly income cannot exceed 150 percent of the federally established poverty level. To learn more, call LIHEAP at 1 800 252-8643 or visit [liheapillinois.com](http://liheapillinois.com).

## **Sharing Program**

The Nicor Gas Sharing Program provides one-time annual grants to residential customers who do not qualify for federal assistance. To qualify, your monthly income cannot exceed 200 percent of the federally established poverty level. Administered by the Salvation Army, you must apply for a Sharing grant in person at a Salvation Army office. For a list of Salvation Army offices, visit [nicorgas.com](http://nicorgas.com) and click on "Financial Assistance."

## **Assistance for activated military personnel**

Nicor Gas offers a package of benefits to assist activated guard and reservists who reside in our service territory. Qualified applicants will need to provide documentation to ensure eligibility. Call us for more information.

# Using natural gas safely and effectively

As with any fuel source, it is important to observe proper safety practices. We've included some specific safety reminders below, as well as tips for using energy effectively. If you have any questions regarding your natural gas service, please call us.

**Call JULIE before you dig:  
1 800 892-0123**

The Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators (JULIE) is the free Illinois one-call system for locating underground facilities. If you will be doing any digging on your property, you are required by law to contact JULIE at least 48 hours in advance (not including weekends and holidays). This allows utilities time to identify and mark their buried facilities. Please do not dig without marks unless the utility has indicated there are no facilities in the dig area.



## *Keep your gas meter accessible and clear of obstructions*

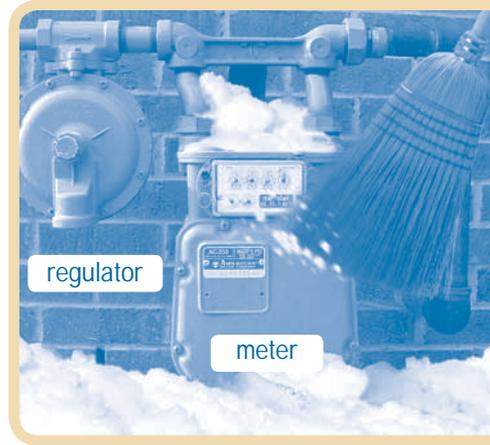
Nicor Gas meter readers are 99.8% accurate. To continue this highly accurate service, we need your help by allowing us full access to your meter and keeping it clear of obstructions.

### **Snow and ice**

The regulator on your gas meter has to be able to release gas in the event of a malfunction. If ice or snow covers the vent, the regulator will sense that it cannot release gas. As a result, the entire system will automatically shut down, stopping gas service to your home.

*To prevent problems, follow these tips:*

- Use a broom (not a shovel) to clear snow from your meter and regulator.
- Remove icicles hanging above your meter.
- Sweep snow away from the outside openings of natural gas appliances (such as clothes dryers).
- Be sure whomever removes snow from your property is aware of the placement of your meter if it is near a sidewalk or driveway.
- If your meter becomes encased in ice, call us.



### **Landscaping**

Our meter readers need to be able to see the dials on your meter. If you have bushes or flowers near your meter, be sure to trim them so our meter readers can accurately read your meter.

### **Animals**

If you keep a dog or other animals outside, please call us. We will make a note on your account, so our meter readers are aware and take extra precautions when they approach your home. If possible, keep your pet inside on the day of your scheduled meter read\*.

### **Fences**

In order for us to get the most accurate meter reading, Nicor Gas must have full access to your meter. If your meter is enclosed by a fence and you will not be at home on the day of your meter read\*, consider leaving your gate unlocked.

*\* To find out when your meter will be read, call us or visit the "My Account" section of [nicorgas.com](http://nicorgas.com).*



## Important safety reminders

### Certain older gas connectors may be dangerous

Gas connectors are corrugated metal tubes used to connect gas appliances in your home to fuel gas supply pipes. Some older brass connectors have come apart, causing fires and explosions.

These older brass connectors have a serious flaw in how their tubing was joined to their end pieces. Over time, the end pieces can separate from the tubing and cause a serious gas leak, explosion, or fire. To our knowledge, these dangerous uncoated brass connectors have not been made for more than 20 years, but many of them are still in use. The older these connectors get, the greater the possibility of failure.

Although not all uncoated connectors have this flaw, it is very difficult to tell which ones do. **Therefore, any uncoated brass connector should be replaced immediately with either a new plastic-coated brass or a new stainless steel connector.** Connectors can wear out from too much moving, bending or corrosion. Connectors should always be replaced whenever the appliance is replaced or moved from its location.

Moving the appliance, even slightly, whether to clean behind it or to inspect its gas connector, can cause the complete failure of one of these older weakened connectors, possibly resulting in a deadly fire or explosion.

**WARNING: Only a qualified professional should check your connector and replace it if needed. Do not try to do this yourself!**

To find a qualified professional who can inspect your appliance connectors, you have several options:

- Call a licensed, insured and bonded contractor that you've used in the past.
- Look in the yellow pages under the headings of:
  - Air Conditioning Equipment & Systems
  - Heating Contractors
  - Furnace Cleaning and Repair
  - Appliances – Household – Major – Service and Repair



*incorrect*

*correct*

- Call Nicor Gas at 1 888 288-8110 to schedule an appointment for an inspection.

The following appliances in your home may need to be inspected for uncoated brass connectors:

- Range, oven or cook top
- Dryer
- Hot water heater

Approved flexible appliance connectors include:

- Coated brass\*
- Uncoated stainless steel
- Coated stainless steel\*

*\*Coatings come in a variety of materials and colors.*

## Carbon monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless and tasteless gas that is produced when any fossil fuel, including natural gas, is burned without enough oxygen. It is a dangerous gas that can build up in your home or business and cause sickness, even death. Please follow these safety precautions:

- Never burn charcoal inside your home or garage.
- Never heat your home with the gas range.
- Always open your chimney flue when you use the fireplace.
- Never run a combustion engine, such as a car, lawn mower or snow blower, in enclosed areas.
- Install a CO detector near bedrooms in your house or apartment.
- Do not install a detector near your kitchen or garage or in a room with a furnace.



- If your detector goes off and you feel ill, leave the house and call 911 or the local fire department. If your detector goes off and you do not feel ill, push your detector's reset button. If the alarm goes off again after five minutes, open the windows, leave the house and call 911 or the local fire department.
- Know the symptoms of CO poisoning: dizziness, nausea, headaches, coughing, irregular heartbeat, pale skin with cherry red lips and ear tips.

## Furnaces/boilers

Regular inspections of your heating and venting system are important to keep it operating safely and efficiently. Have a qualified professional inspect your heating and venting system and chimney annually. If repairs are needed, have a qualified professional perform the work. In addition, please follow these safety precautions:

- Clean heating unit air filters regularly and replace as needed.
- Ensure panels and grills on your heating unit are in place and that the fan compartment door is closed when the system is on. Leaving these doors open can cause CO to build up.
- Keep the space around your heating unit clean and clear.

## Hot water heaters

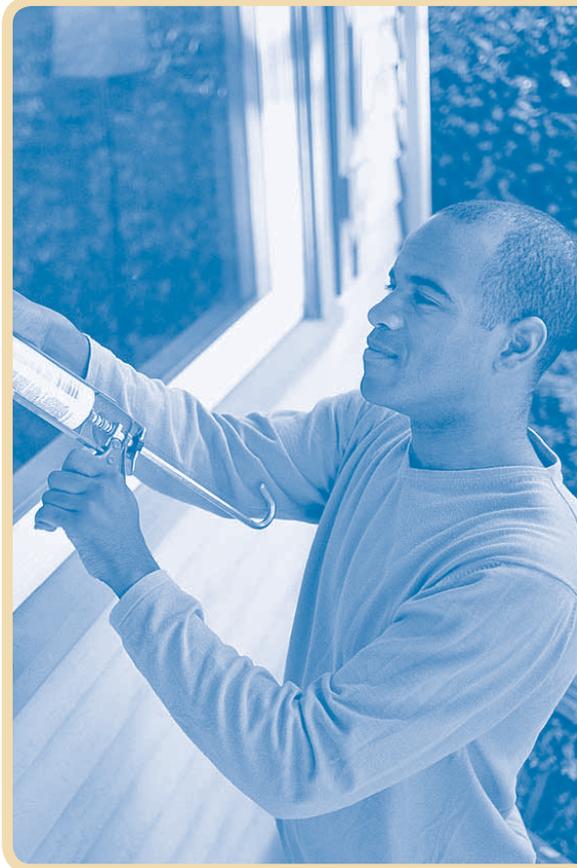
Scalding from hot water happens most often to children, seniors and people with disabilities. To avoid accidental scalding by hot water, turn the setting on your water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit (the "warm" or "low" settings). Between 95 and 100 degrees Fahrenheit is suitable for a child or senior citizen.



## *Making the most effective use of natural gas*

Control your energy expenses by weatherizing your home or business and educating yourself on how you use energy in your home.

- Have your furnace cleaned and inspected annually.
- Replace the weather stripping and seals on windows and doors to save between five and 10 percent on your annual heating and cooling costs.
- Install a programmable thermostat to automatically lower the temperature setting at night or during unoccupied periods.
- Insulate your water heater tank to reduce heat loss and lower the temperature on your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Fix leaky faucets. One drip can waste up to 250 gallons of water per month.



- Get your air ducts sealed by a professional HVAC contractor. According to the Department of Energy, you can lose up to 40 percent of your heated or cooled air through leaks in your ductwork.

Residential customers can find many more helpful suggestions in our energy conservation guide, "Keeping the Warmth In and the Cold Out," which is available for download at [nicorgas.com](http://nicorgas.com) under "Gas Costs."



If you're a business customer, visit [nicorgas.com/commercial](http://nicorgas.com/commercial) for ideas designed to help you make the most effective use of your energy.

**For our business customers**

*Wouldn't it be nice to know how to use energy more wisely in your facility? We can review your current systems and your facility's energy requirements to determine what works best for your business. To learn more, contact our marketing team at 1 630 388-2596 or [energysolutions@nicor.com](mailto:energysolutions@nicor.com).*



# Maintaining your natural gas lines

Nicor Gas carefully maintains a network of gas mains and service lines that deliver natural gas to more than 640 communities in Illinois. This comprehensive infrastructure provides the natural gas necessary to successfully serve more than two million businesses and homes. Needless to say, protecting and maintaining this system is critical. While Nicor Gas employees regularly monitor our gas line systems, we also rely on the assistance of our customers.

## Nicor Gas responsibilities:

Nicor Gas is responsible for maintaining the system of gas lines that deliver natural gas to your home or business. We maintain this system by regularly monitoring for corrosion and leaks, up to and including the meter that measures your natural gas usage.

## Residential customer responsibilities:

You are responsible for maintaining the natural gas lines that begin at the gas meter and extend (either above or below ground) to your natural gas-burning equipment, including lines to yard lights, grills, pool heaters, and garage or workshop heaters. If fuel lines are not maintained, they may be subject to the potential hazards of corrosion and leakage.

If the meter is more than three feet away from your home, Nicor Gas will monitor for corrosion and leaks on the pipe extending from the meter to the first building. However, you are still responsible for repairs to these lines.

To make sure the natural gas lines on your property are in good condition; any buried natural gas piping that is not monitored or maintained by Nicor Gas should be periodically inspected for leaks. Metal pipes should also be monitored for corrosion. Steps should be taken to prevent corrosion and to repair or replace pipes that are unsafe. You should also check indoor natural gas piping periodically for corrosion.



*You are also responsible for:*

- Providing access to Nicor Gas meter readers. If your meter is inside and you will not be home, call 1 888 Nicor4u to make arrangements for our service person to enter.
- Contacting JULIE at 1 800 892-0123 before you dig on your property.



### **Business customer responsibilities:**

You are responsible for maintaining the natural gas lines that begin at the outlet of the gas meter and extend (either above or below ground) to manufacturing buildings, warehouses and outbuildings, garages and workshops, barns, stalls or storage sheds and other utility buildings.

*You are also responsible for:*

- Providing access to Nicor Gas meter readers. If your meter is inside and you will not be available, call 1 888 Nicor4u to make arrangements for our service person to enter.
- Contacting JULIE at 1 800 892-0123 before you dig on your property.

It is our commitment to provide you with superior customer service at all times. However, if an issue has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you may contact the Illinois Commerce Commission.

**Illinois Commerce Commission**  
**State of Illinois Building**  
**160 North LaSalle Street, Suite C-800**  
**Chicago, IL 60601**  
**800 524-0795**  
**TTY 800 858-9277**

To file a complaint electronically, visit [icc.state.il.us](http://icc.state.il.us) and click on "Natural Gas."





**Nicor Gas**

P.O. Box 190  
Aurora, IL 60507-0109

1 888 Nicor4u

1 888 642-6748

[nicorgas.com](http://nicorgas.com)