

## NATURAL GAS SAFETY REMINDERS

### Natural Gas

Natural gas is a highly combustible fossil fuel primarily composed of methane, along with various other hydrocarbons. Natural gas is invisible, odorless, tasteless, colorless, and lighter than air. It can displace oxygen in an enclosed space possibly causing suffocation. Austin Utilities adds a chemical called mercaptan to give it a rotten-egg scent to assist in detecting leaks, even in small quantities. While natural gas leaks are uncommon, using your sense of smell, sight, and hearing can help you identify a gas leak.



#### Sight

- Dead or brown vegetation in lawns or boulevards
- Dirt blowing up into the air
- Water bubbling in wet areas
- Fire and/or explosion near known gas pipeline areas



#### Hearing

- Hissing, blowing, or roaring type sounds



#### Smell

- Sulfur or rotten egg type odor

### Carbon Monoxide

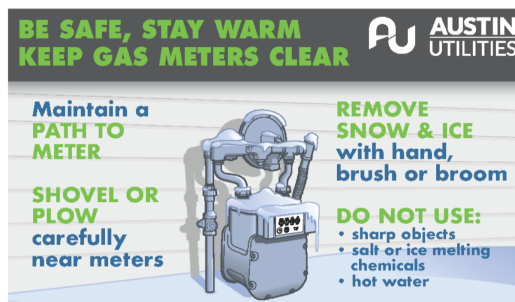
Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas formed by the incomplete combustion of fuels. Carbon monoxide is often referred to as The Silent Killer because when it enters the blood stream it prevents the blood from absorbing oxygen. When oxygen deficient blood reaches the heart and brain, it can damage those organs and cause illness or even death. Since CO cannot be detected by our senses, it can build up indoors and humans have no way to detect the problem until they become ill. Carbon monoxide poisoning can be prevented though by installing CO alarms throughout your home and maintaining fuel burning appliances. It is also important to know the signs and symptoms of CO poisoning as they are similar to the flu.

#### Symptoms of CO Exposure:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Drowsy
- Weak
- Vomiting
- Convulsions

### Meter Safety

It is important to protect your gas meter set to prevent any accidental gas leaks. Accumulations of snow and ice can cause serious damage to the gas meter and could result in temporary loss of natural gas supply.



#### What to do if you smell a gas leak or your CO alarm is going off -

Call Austin Utilities at 507.433.8886, 24/7, and a trained Gas Service Technician will be dispatched to take the appropriate steps to make the area safe. This service is FREE of charge. To learn more about the 24/7 services we offer, see inside this newsletter!

NEW THIS YEAR!

### AU LINEWORKER & UTILITY RELATED TRADE SCHOLARSHIP

One \$1,000 scholarship is available to qualified applicants yearly. The scholarship has been established to assist students pursuing a post-secondary education in a utility related trade or electric utility lineworker program. Any local high school senior who has a parent or legal guardian who is an active customer of Austin Utilities may apply. **Applications must be received by April 1st.**



### AU - MMUA SCHOLARSHIP

One \$500 scholarship is available to a local graduating high school senior with the intent to increase the awareness of municipal utility organizations. The winning essay will automatically be sent for consideration of the Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship Award provided by MMUA. That scholarship fund is split into \$2,000, \$1,500, \$1,000, and \$500 scholarships. **Applications must be received at Austin Utilities by April 7th.**

For more information and scholarship guidelines visit [www.austinutilities.com/pages/scholarship/](http://www.austinutilities.com/pages/scholarship/)

# 2023 Austin Utilities CONSERVE & \$SAVE®

## Residential Rebates

The best way to lower your energy cost is to Conserve & Save®. Whether you are buying LED (light-emitting diodes) bulbs, a new toilet, or even a new furnace or air conditioning unit – your purchase may qualify for a rebate. Before you shop, visit the Austin Utilities website for minimum qualifications for purchases and be sure to purchase ENERGY STAR® and WaterSense® products.

### ENERGY STAR® Appliance Rebates

Clothes Washers .....	\$25-\$90
Dehumidifiers.....	\$15-\$25
Dishwashers.....	\$25-\$40
Freezers.....	\$25
Heat Pump Clothes Dryer (new for 2023!) .....	\$25
Refrigerators.....	\$25
Room Air Conditioners.....	\$25

*Bonus Recycling Rebates up to \$15 for Dehumidifiers, Freezer, Refrigerators or Room Air Conditioners*

### ENERGY STAR® LED Lighting Rebates

LED Bulbs (2023 - last year for these rebates) .....	50% of bulb or package cost, not to exceed \$7 per bulb
LED Light Fixtures .....	50% of bulb or package cost, not to exceed \$20 per fixture
Ceiling Fans with LED Lighting .....	50% of fixture cost, not to exceed \$20 per fixture

### Heating and Cooling Rebates

Central Air Conditioners .....	starting at \$100
Air Source/Mini Split/Geothermal Heat Pumps.....	starting at \$100
Furnace .....	up to \$400
Boilers .....	up to \$500
Water Heaters .....	up to \$100
Smart Thermostat .....	up to \$100
Furnace Fan Motor and ECM Circulator Pump .....	starting at \$50
Furnace, Boiler & Central AC Clean & Tuneup .....	\$50
Electronic Hearth Ignition .....	up to \$75
Water Heaters .....	starting at \$125

### Building Shell Rebates

Insulation .....	Up to \$200
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### Water Rebates

Rain Barrels.....	\$10
WaterSense High-Efficiency Toilets .....	\$25
WaterSense Showerhead .....	up to \$25
Weather-Based Irrigation Controllers.....	50% of cost, not to exceed \$75 per controller

### Other Rebates

Solar Electric .....	\$500
Solar Thermal .....	\$15/ sq ft
Partners in Planting Tree Rebate .....	\$10



If you need energy saving ideas specific to your home, consider getting a Conserve & Save® House Call energy audit. The Standard House Call includes reviewing your energy use history; performing an in-depth thermal envelope analysis; directing the installation of energy saving devices; assessing appliances, water heater, and HVAC equipment; performing a blower door test; & providing a detailed written report that lists energy-saving recommendations. A Performance House Call offers all these things plus an infrared diagnosis.

Call us today to set up your House Call

Standard House Call - \$300 value for a co-pay of \$50/Performance House Call - \$380 value for a co-pay of \$125

# Emergency 24/7 Services vs Business Hours Services

Austin Utilities provides many services for our customers free of charge. Depending on the service you need, you may have to wait until the next business day. Only emergency services are provided 24/7, and some services are only provided seasonally. Below is a list of what services are available 24/7 and what services are only available during normal business hours.

## Emergency After Hours Call-Out

- Gas Smell or Odd Odor Check
- Carbon Monoxide/Smoke Alarm
- No Heat/Thermostats (Winter Schedule Only)
- Light & Inspect (After AU has worked in area)
- No Water/Frozen Pipes- One-time thawing service available during regular business hours.
- Water Leaks Inside Before Meter

## Business Hours Call-Out

- Light/Check Gas Appliances
  - Fireplace
  - Space Heater
  - Wall Heater
  - Pool Heater
  - Stove/Oven
  - Water Heaters
- Turning Appliances Off/On
  - Vacation
  - Seasonal
  - Bug Bomb
- Ice Build-up On or Around Meter
- Low Water Pressure
- Water Odor/Color



If you need to contact Austin Utilities for service or an emergency issue, please call 507-433-8886 to speak with our 24/7 dispatch service.

## Employee Spotlight

### Tyler Underdahl Journey Lineworker

Tyler Underdahl joined Austin Utilities as an Apprentice Lineworker in 2014. Electrical line work runs in his family. He grew up with 4 siblings in Albert Lea where his father has been a lineworker for almost 30 years. Tyler received his certification and became a Journey Lineworker at AU in 2017. He says he works on different projects and areas each day and the ability to work outdoors and do aerial overhead work is a big plus.

Tyler and his wife Alayna have been married for 6 years and have two daughters. Evelyn is 3 years old and Sloan is 2 years old. His hobbies include snowmobiling, boating, and camping but being a dad takes up a lot of Tyler's free time especially while Alayna is finishing her schooling to become a Nurse Practitioner.

Tyler says his plans for the future are to work hard and hopefully retire early.



# HeatShare



Austin Utilities would like to thank the customers who donate to our Salvation Army HeatShare Roundup program or make a one time donation. HeatShare provides emergency utility assistance for people with no place left to turn. The program is funded by customers of local utility companies like Austin Utilities. In 2022, we were able to provide \$3,844.63 to the HeatShare program. All funds collected are given to the Austin Salvation Army which works with local community members in need. Sign up for HeatShare Roundup today!

## Goergen to Retire

Austin Utilities is announcing the retirement of Butch Goergen, Information Systems Manager, after 30 years of service effective February 28, 2023. "Thank you to Butch for his long-term career at Austin Utilities. We greatly appreciate his leadership to better serve our community. We wish him the best in his retirement," said Mark Nibaur, General Manager at Austin Utilities.



Butch joined Austin Utilities in 1993, the year the internet became free and open to everyone. He started as a computer programmer but was soon the department manager. During his career he brought technology to the utility by establishing our domain and building our network. He also oversaw the installation of a fiber network system that would monitor all our equipment and sites from one location. More recently he has focused his time on keeping AU safe from ever increasing cyber security threats. Butch says future challenges will include shifting IT applications to cloud based solutions.



**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** If you are struggling to pay your utility bill be sure to call our office to set up payment arrangement. Cold Weather Protection is in effect October 1 through April 30th, but customers who have a past due balance need a payment plan in place to avoid disconnection. Additional assistance is available from these organizations.

### SEMCAC

507-433-5889

111 N Main, Suite 201

Applications available online or stop in the office for assistance.

[www.semcac.org/energy/eap-application/](http://www.semcac.org/energy/eap-application/)

### Mower Co Health & Human Services

507-437-9701

201 1st St NE, Suite 18

Applications for assistance are available in the lobby and online.

### Salvation Army

507-437-4566

206 1st Ave NE

Call the HeatShare hotline at 800-842-7279 for immediate help if you receive a disconnect notice

To discuss programs available from AU, like budget billing and AutoPay, or to make payment arrangements please contact us at 507.433.8886 or email us at [talk2au@austinutilities.com](mailto:talk2au@austinutilities.com)

## Austin Utilities Board of Commissioners

Thomas C. Baudler  
Steve Greenman

Jeanne Sheehan  
Kristin Johnson

Jay Lutz

To contact or find more information on AU's elected Commissioners visit

[www.austinutilities.com/pages/board](http://www.austinutilities.com/pages/board)

ONLINE  
NEWSLETTER  
& MORE INFO  
ON OUR  
WEBSITE



**AU will be Closed**  
**Monday, Feb. 20th**  
**For Presidents Day**



## Austin Utilities

1908 14th St NE Austin, MN 55912

Office: 507-433-8886

Email: [talk2au@austinutilities.com](mailto:talk2au@austinutilities.com)

Website: [www.austinutilities.com](http://www.austinutilities.com)

