

Stay Warm and Save; Winter Energy Saving Tips for Every Home

Minnesota winters are known for their extreme cold. This can significantly impact utility bills. As temperatures drop, heating systems have to work harder and run longer to maintain comfortable temperatures inside your home. Whether you are a homeowner or a renter, taking steps to keep the heat in and the cold out can reduce your utility bills. Use the steps below to improve energy efficiency and lower your utility bills.

Homeowners



- **Furnace Clean and Tune:** more efficiency and better air quality are benefits of having your furnace cleaned and tuned.
- **Install smart thermostats:** consider a smart thermostat that can automatically adjust temperatures based on your schedule.
- **Insulate properly:** check your attic insulation and basement insulation levels and add more if necessary.
- **Install energy efficient equipment:** consider purchasing an energy efficient furnace or boiler to save on winter energy costs.

Renters

- **Ceiling Fans:** switch ceiling fan direction to rotate clockwise during winter to circulate warm air downwards.
- **Adjust your thermostat:** set your thermostat to a comfortable but lower temperature when you are home and awake and lower it further when you're sleeping or out of the house.
- **Utilize natural sunlight:** open curtains and blinds on south-facing windows during the day to let in natural warmth and close at night to prevent heat loss.
- **Cover drafty areas:** use heavy curtains, blankets, or window film to insulate windows that feel drafty.



We offer Conserve & Save™ rebates to help you save even more on energy efficient equipment. Visit our website www.austinutilities.com/rebates-programs/

HeatShare 2024 Results

The HeatShare program, administered by the Salvation Army, is designed to assist low-income households, seniors, and families facing financial crises with past-due utility bills. At Austin Utilities, we offer a HeatShare Roundup program where we round up your monthly bill to the nearest dollar and donate the difference to the Salvation Army's HeatShare program. In 2024, the HeatShare Roundup raised \$3,836.37, with 169 customers enrolled. The total contributions for the HeatShare program in 2024 amounted to \$5,573.92, which helped support 18 households in our community. Since AU HeatShare Roundup began in December 2021, AU customers have donated over \$8,900.00. The majority of the funding for the HeatShare program comes from donations made by customers of Austin Utilities. If you would like to sign up and help us assist even more families in our community in 2025, please contact customer service at AU or scan the QR code.



Allegiant
UTILITY SERVICES

(866) 925-8048

Austin Utilities' Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMI) project is moving into its third year. This project involves upgrading electric, natural gas, and water meters in our entire service territory. This equipment will provide us with improved service, operational savings, and better billing information, all at no cost to you.

In the upcoming weeks, you may receive a letter or phone call from Allegiant Utility Services, a company who is an authorized contractor to perform the electric and water meter replacements. If you receive notification from Allegiant, please work with them to make an appointment at a convenient time. The appointment will take 15-30 minutes and is at no cost to you.

Use Budget Billing to Help Manage Your Utility Bills

Budget Billing is a program designed to level out the fluctuations of your monthly utility bill. How it works is your previous 12 months of usage is divided into 12 equal payments that you will pay for the upcoming year.

The predictability of budget billing makes it easier for budgeting, especially in the winter and summer where the weather can dramatically impact your utility bill. A customer enrolled in budget billing paid \$2797.00 for the last 12 months. Their budget bill amount is set at \$233.00 for the next 12 months, no matter what the weather brings.

Budget billing paired with autopay is convenient for customers to not only know their bill amount ahead of time but have reassurance that it will be paid on time.



Learn more by visiting our website at www.austinutilities.com/pages/payment_options/



FEBRUARY ENERGY-SAVING TIP

TURN DOWN THE HEAT, TURN UP THE HUMIDITY!

Running a humidifier in the winter may allow you to reduce the temperature of your home up to 2 degrees while maintaining the proper comfort level. Adjust your humidity level according to the outdoor air temperature.

Outdoor Temperature	Ideal Indoor Humidity
20 to 40 degrees	Not more than 40%
10 to 20 degrees	Not more than 35%
0 to 10 degrees	Not more than 30%
-10 to 0 degrees	Not more than 25%
-20 to -10 degrees	Not more than 20%

FALL IN LOVE WITH EVERY HOT SHOWER.

SHARE THE WARMTH THIS VALENTINES DAY WITH A NEW WATER HEATER.

Purchase a new natural gas storage water heater or a new natural gas tankless water heater and get a **\$500** rebate!

CONSERVE & \$AVE™

For more details, visit austinutilities.com.

REMINDER!

MARCH 31 2024 REBATE APPLICATIONS DEADLINE IS MARCH 31, 2025

austinutilities.com/pages/rebates-programs/

CONSERVE & \$AVE™

Behind the Scenes – Dispatch and System Operations

Dispatchers are part of AU's operations team. We have five full-time dispatchers who are responsible for answering customer calls, dispatching AU personnel, and monitoring multiple systems 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Every day is different in dispatch – handling different scenarios. The time of year can change their responsibilities. An outage, a customer experiencing no heat in their home, or a water main break are a few of the issues that the team will face. They work to identify the actions needed and dispatch the appropriate personnel to resolve it. The team also monitors the electric, natural gas, and water systems, making sure each system is working properly. If an issue occurs, they are responsible for prioritizing and dispatching the appropriate department to find a solution.



Dispatch works closely with all departments within the organization. Close working relationships enhance the ability to troubleshoot customers' questions or concerns and gives them a better understanding of which crews to dispatch. As a result, customers and crews benefit from faster response times.

Knowledge of system operations, customer service, and computer skills are essential for their role. Having a general knowledge of how each department functions is also beneficial. As one dispatcher put it, "We are here, 24 hours a day. Give us a call if you have questions or concerns."





PROUD TO BE PINK! austinutilities.com

CHECK OUT OUR PODCAST



WRIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW




Always Useful Information Videos
From Austin Utilities



NOTICE

In compliance with the Code of Federal regulation #49, Part 192.16, Austin Utilities must notify each customer who owns buried natural gas piping after the meter.

1. Austin Utilities does not maintain the customer's buried piping.
2. If the customer's buried piping is not maintained, it may be subject to the potential hazards of corrosion and leakage.
3. Buried gas piping should be:
 - (a) periodically inspected for leaks.
 - (b) periodically inspected for corrosion if the piping is metallic.
 - (c) repaired if any unsafe condition is discovered.
4. When excavating near buried gas piping, the piping should be located in advance, and the excavation done by hand.
5. Austin Utilities and plumbing and heating contractors, can assist in locating, inspecting, and repairing the customer's buried piping.

Customers with buried natural gas piping should feel free to contact Austin Utilities at 433-8886. You can also find information at www.austinutilities.com.

Red Cross Blood Drive

Thursday, Feb. 27th
Austin Utilities
1908 14th St NE
9:00 am - 3:00 pm
redcrossblood.org



Austin Utilities Board of Commissioners

Tyler Hulsebus **Jeanne Sheehan**
Steve Greenman **Jay Lutz**
Kristin Johnson

To contact or find more information on AU's elected Commissioners visit www.austinutilities.com/pages/board



AUSTIN UTILITIES
will be CLOSED
MONDAY, FEB. 17th
PRESIDENT'S DAY



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