

## The NEW utility bill statement— redesigned with YOU in mind!

NPU has improved the design of its utility bill statement. This is due, in part, to state legislation passed last year that fixed a disparity in Connecticut's Gross Revenue Tax.\* This tax is paid by all utility companies. Prior to this legislation, municipal utility customers paid this tax on their entire electric utility bill. The legislation now requires that the tax only be charged on the transmission and distribution portion—not on the energy generation portion. This benefits NPU customers because energy generation is the fastest rising and most unstable portion of a utility bill. And, although the new tax rate is slightly higher, customers will actually save money because they will be taxed on less of their bill!

Eliminating the gross revenue tax on energy generation will require a change to the published rate structure, resulting in changes to the way some charges will appear on your monthly electric utility bill. Since the utility statement had to be modified to accommodate these changes, NPU has taken this opportunity to make other changes—all designed to make it better for you!

### Electric Rate Definitions

Electric rates cover three separate areas of service: generation, transmission, and distribution. **Generation** covers the expense of producing electricity. **Transmission and distribution** cover the costs associated with delivering the electricity from the power plant to you, the end user.

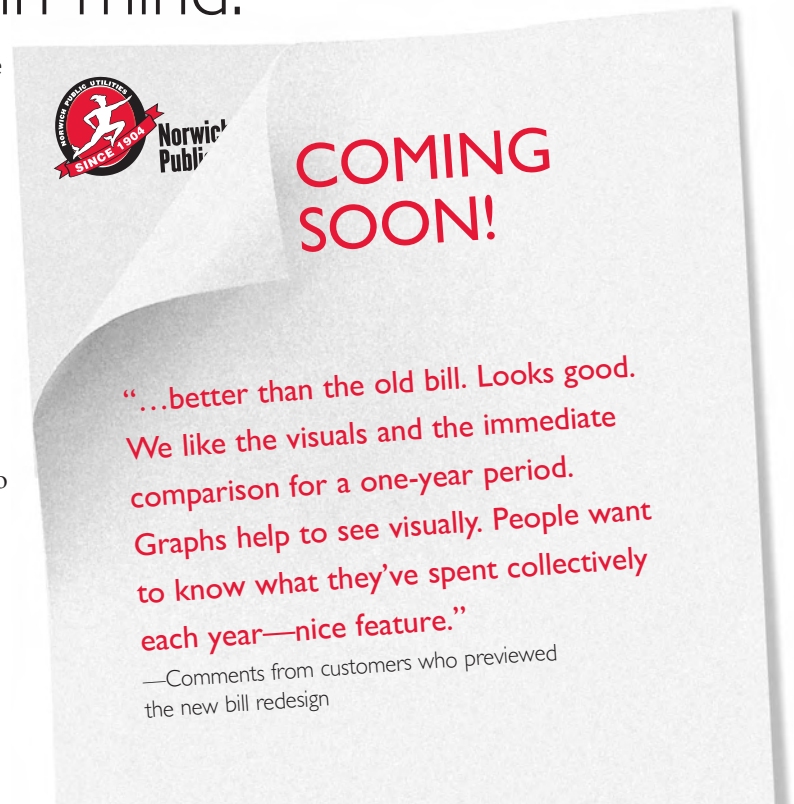
### Changes at a glance

NPU received helpful feedback from a cross section of NPU customers and incorporated their suggestions into the statement redesign. Overall, customers had positive responses to the new larger statement size, the utility graphs now showing 13 months of data, and the organized billing summary area.

The new statement makes it quick and easy to find key information, yet at the same time provides detailed account information.

### Here are some of the changes you'll see:

- Clearer headings for easier readability
- Resized to show more detail and avoid costly two-page bills
- Graphs showing 13-month usage data
- Provides information so customers can calculate and verify their own bill
- Includes an account summary area
- Only lists services customers have in order to eliminate confusion
- The tear-off remittance stub has been moved to the bottom of the statement for faster and easier payment processing



### New statement debut

Starting in May, you will begin to receive the new, improved NPU utility bill statement along with detailed information about the redesign.

### New! Online bill payment

For added customer convenience, NPU now offers secure, online bill payment. It's easy and convenient—plus it saves a stamp! You can even pay with credit or debit cards. Try it today by going to [www.norwichpublicutilities.com](http://www.norwichpublicutilities.com) and clicking on the link.

\* For additional information, see article, "Controlling rising energy costs," July/August 2006 issue of *Community Matters*—available on the NPU website.

# Heat your home safely and efficiently

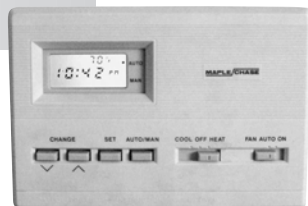


## Space heaters

While portable space heaters can add additional warmth to a chilly home, they cannot replace the need for a properly functioning and well-maintained central heating system for two very good reasons—safety and cost.

**Electric space heaters use more than two-times the energy of a traditional oil or natural gas system to generate the same amount of heat.**

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), space heaters were involved in 73% of deaths, 60% of injuries and 51% of the damage from home heating fires.\* “We usually get a flurry of calls early in the heating season. People should be aware of the dangers and take extra precautions. Simple common sense can prevent many fires,” comments Norwich Fire Chief, Kenneth Scandariato.



Space heaters also cost more to operate. Electric space heaters use more than two-times the energy of a traditional oil or natural gas system to generate the same amount of heat.

Do not use space heaters as a replacement for a lack of insulation or repair of drafty spaces. All this does is heat the outdoor air! Used as a short-term solution, space heaters can be helpful. However, it is safer and more cost-effective in the long run to increase your central heating system’s capacity.

## Save money—program your thermostat

Programmable thermostats are a great way to save money on heating bills. They can be programmed to lower the temperature when no one is home or during sleep. We suggest a seven to 10 degrees set back. But remember, the lower you set the programmer, the longer it will take to warm up your home. Allow 30 minutes to one hour for the temperature to rise back up to a desired level. Be sure to keep the temperature set at a level high enough to prevent water pipes from freezing.

\*2003 statistics. [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)

## If you must purchase or use a space heater, please be sure to follow these tips:

- Buy only space heaters with the Underwriter’s Laboratory (UL) safety listing, making sure it has a thermostat control and will turn off automatically if the heater falls over
- Do not attempt to dry clothes with or place objects on any space heater
- Keep heaters at least three feet away from flammable objects or other heaters
- Unplug your space heaters when not in use
- Use caution, keep space heaters properly maintained and think safety

## Additional safety tips from Fire Chief Scandariato:

- If using extension cords, never coil or hide them because they create heat when in use
- Repair or replace pinched, frayed or compressed cords because cords in these conditions can become fire hazards

## Energy efficiency walk-through analysis for NPU residential customers

Save money and conserve energy by making your home more energy efficient.

To request your home analysis, email [communitymatters@npumail.com](mailto:communitymatters@npumail.com), call 860-887-2555 or visit the NPU Customer Service Center at 173 North Main Street.

# Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning

Carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning kills more than 200 people each year and sends roughly 10,000 people to the hospital emergency room for treatment.\*

CO is a colorless, odorless gas produced by burning any type of fuel. Early symptoms of CO poisoning are like those of the flu—but without the fever—and include **headache, tiredness, shortness of breath, nausea and dizziness.**

If you suspect that you are experiencing CO poisoning, get fresh air immediately. Leave the home and call 9-1-1 for assistance from a neighbor’s home. You could lose consciousness and die from CO poisoning if you stay in the home.

Get medical attention immediately. Tell medical staff that CO poisoning is suspected. Call the fire department, who will determine when it’s safe to return home.

You can prevent carbon monoxide poisoning by installing CO detectors in your home. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recommends detectors that meet the Underwriter’s Laboratory (UL) Standard 2034.

For more information, visit the CPSC website at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).

\* U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)

# Winter parking and snow removal regulations

Winter has finally arrived! And, the Norwich police and public works departments seek the public's cooperation during winter storms.

## Winter storm parking

The Norwich Police Department would like to remind all motorists of the City's traffic regulation, which **prohibits parking on the odd side of all city streets** during snowstorm removal by the Department of Public Works and Connecticut DOT crews.

Please be aware that parking is banned from both sides of certain city streets, such as Old Cemetery Lane, North Cliff Street and Shetucket Avenue in Taftville.

Contact the police department at 886-5561 for a complete list of banned streets.

Vehicles found violating the winter parking ban may be **towed at the owner's expense** and are also subject to a **\$25 fine**.

With the public's support, crews can safely and efficiently remove snow from roadways.

## Snow removal

Property owners and tenants are **required to remove all snow and sleet from their sidewalks within three hours** of a storm. Contact the police department at 886-5561 for more information.

Also, NPU wishes to remind its customers to keep outdoor utility meters clear of snow and ice. This way, meter readers can reach the meters to get readings and NPU can provide customers with accurate bills.



## Winter safety tips

Helpful suggestions that can keep you safe on winter roadways.

### Before you drive away

- Check your car to make sure the brakes, windshield wipers, defroster and heater are working well
- Keep the exhaust pipe free from snow
- Clear snow from headlights and taillights so you can see and be seen; clear snow from bumpers and license plates, too
- Prevent freezing by using antifreeze instead of plain water in your radiator and washer fluid instead of water in your windshield washer well
- Make sure tires are properly inflated and treads are not worn
- Store these items in your vehicle—an ice scraper, a broom to brush snow away, a shovel with which to “dig out,” sand or burlap for traction, a flashlight and an old towel to dry your hands
- Carry a cell phone for emergency use
- Safety belts reduce the risk of death from a crash by 50% for adults and toddlers and 70% for infants—use them!

### While on the road

- Allow extra time to get to your destination because driving in winter conditions can take longer
- In case of delays or detours, make sure your gas tank is full
- Keep your windshield and windows clear and free from fog
- Slow down and keep more distance between your vehicle and the one ahead because stopping can take longer in snow and icy conditions; avoid sudden stops and quick direction changes
- Visibility can be limited during winter conditions, so keep a careful watch for other vehicles and snow removal equipment
- Give way to snow plows and other DOT vehicles—they can't move out of your way as easily as you can move out of theirs
- If you become stranded, stay with your vehicle and try to conserve fuel until help arrives

## Sources—and clues—to a possible carbon monoxide problem

### Possible Sources

- Improperly maintained or damaged space heaters
- Malfunctioning gas ranges, generators, water heaters or furnaces—keep all appliances properly maintained
- CO from using a charcoal grill, generator or exhaust from an automobile inside a garage
- Loose or disconnected vent/chimney connections

### Warnings

- Never install or service combustion appliances without proper knowledge, skills and tools
- Never put foil on the bottom of a gas oven because it interferes with combustion
- Never leave a car running in the garage—even with the door open
- Never run a generator inside the home, garage or crawlspace; when running a generator outdoors, keep it away from windows and doors

## Ongoing – 1st Friday of each month

### First Fridays

Downtown Norwich comes alive with arts and entertainment every first Friday of the month! View original art at several galleries or enjoy a musical or theater production in our theaters. Call 886-4683 for more information.

## Ongoing – 1st and 3rd Friday of each month

### Open Mic Night

City Perk, located at 154 Main Street (across from the Courthouse), from 5:30-10:00 p.m. For more information, contact Shawn at 204-8443.

## Ongoing – 1st Thursday of each month

### Taftville Lions Pasta Supper

ALL YOU CAN EAT Pasta Supper at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Taftville from 4:30-6:30 p.m. \$5 per person. Take out available. All profits benefit various Lions Charities and local Taftville projects. Call 889-8300 for more information.

## February 10 – April 22

### Robert Rauschenberg Art Exhibit, "Posters for a Better World"

Traveling Smithsonian Art Exhibit will have its only New England appearance in downtown Norwich at 91 Main St. Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 12-4 and Fridays from 12-6. Call 887-2789 or 3289 or visit [www.artexhibitnorwich.com](http://www.artexhibitnorwich.com) for more information.

## February (2008 Biennial)

**The Old Norwich 9-Mile Square Memorabilia Show**  
Everything & anything from Norwich, Bozrah, Franklin, Lisbon, Griswold and Preston. Featuring the largest collection of Norwich-made Firearms ever displayed. Sale, swap meet and appraisals from 9a.m.-4p.m. at the Taftville K of C Hall. Sponsored by the Guns of Norwich. Call 639-7702 or 889-4108 for more information.

## February 24, 2007

### Sweet Potato Festival

Food and entertainment sponsored by Norwich NAACP from noon to 3p.m. Location TBA. Call Jacqueline Owens for more information at 887-4888.

## February 25 – April 5, 2007

**64th Annual Connecticut Artists Juried Exhibition**  
Paintings, sculpture, photography, print and mixed media. Slater Memorial Museum, 108 Crescent St. Call 887-2506 for more information.

## April 5, 2007

### Opening Day for The Connecticut Defenders

Class Double A affiliate of the San Francisco Giants. Call 887-7962 for more information.

## April 15 – May 3, 2007

### Saturday Morning Art Classes

#### 113th Annual Exhibition

Slater Memorial Museum, 108 Crescent St. Call 887-2506 for more information.

## June through August 2007

### Stage III Breast Cancer Women!

FREE, one-day relaxation study aboard the sloop "HADO" at Pilots Point Marina in Westbrook. Snack on the back deck after the session. For more information or to sign up, contact Carline Johnson Lutyński, Program Director for Del Function, Inc., 889-3424.



## Rose City Renaissance "Picturing Norwich" Photo Competition

Here's a competition offering the Norwich community an opportunity to show off its talent.

The Rose City Renaissance invites all interested area photographers—amateurs and professionals—to participate in its second annual juried photography competition, sponsored by the Greater Norwich Area Chamber of Commerce. There is also a category for youth ages 13 and under. Prizes will be awarded. All entries must be received by April 30, 2007 and meet submission requirements. Winners will be announced at the Show's opening reception on May 18, 2007. The show will highlight the people, places, events, and architecture of Norwich.

For detailed information and submission guidelines, contact Rick Kramer, Executive Director, at 860 887-3289, [rbryankramer@msn.com](mailto:rbryankramer@msn.com) or visit [www.rosecityrenaissance.com](http://www.rosecityrenaissance.com).



## Here to Serve You

Visit a special link on our web site for more information:  
[www.norwichpublicutilities.com/communitymatters](http://www.norwichpublicutilities.com/communitymatters)

Please call, fax or email us your questions, comments and suggestions.  
Norwich Public Utilities, 173 North Main Street Norwich CT 06360  
Tel: 860-887-2555 | Fax: 860-823-4172 | Email: [communitymatters@npumail.com](mailto:communitymatters@npumail.com)

This bulletin is printed on paper with 20% post-consumer fiber, and it costs about 11 cents to print.

Proudly printed in Norwich by Minuteman Press.