



Helping **YOU** *Stay Safe and Warm*

In the coming days, Houstonians will be experiencing extremely cold temperatures. At CenterPoint Energy, safety is our number-one priority, so we are offering these tips to ensure a safe and warm home:

Electric

High winds and ice could cause downed power lines in isolated areas. Always assume downed lines or wires are energized and potentially dangerous if contacted.

- Do not go near downed lines or fallen wires.
- Keep your distance from objects touching downed lines (tree limbs, vehicles, fences, etc.).
- If someone already made contact with a power line, do not try to rescue them – you can't help if you become a victim. Instead, call 911.
- Report downed power lines to 713-207-2222 or 800-332-7143.

Natural Gas

- **Make sure your heating system is working properly.** Malfunctioning home heating equipment can cause a fire or [carbon monoxide](#) poisoning. Check that outside furnace vents aren't blocked by snow or ice. Keep your furnace filter clean for safe, efficient operation.
- **Use space heaters safely.** Use a space heater with an automatic shut-off, and keep children, pets and all items at least three feet away. A space heater that uses gas, propane or wood should be vented to the outside. Stoves and ovens should never be used for space heating.
- **Check your carbon monoxide (CO) and smoke alarms.** These devices are essential to warn you of a fire or dangerous malfunction with a furnace, water heater, fireplace or stove. Test your alarms monthly and change batteries every year.
- **Immediately report a suspected gas leak.** If you smell the "[rotten egg](#)" odor of natural gas, immediately leave on foot, go to a safe location and call both 911 and CenterPoint Energy at 713-659-2111 or 800-752-8036. Don't use electric switches, phones (including cell phones), drive or start a car, or do anything that could cause a spark.

Energy Efficiency

Cold temperatures also mean increased energy usage. CenterPoint Energy recommends the following tips for more efficient heating:

Furnace: A furnace is the largest natural gas consuming appliance.

- Set your thermostat no higher than 68 degrees. If possible, set it at 65 degrees when you are home and 60 degrees when you are away from home.
- Lowering your thermostat can help you save on your annual heating costs. Installing a programmable thermostat can help you automatically control your heat usage. Add on extra layers of clothing to keep warm.

Other appliances: Although they consume less natural gas, you can still maximize their efficiency.

- Run your washing machine, dish washer and gas dryer only with full loads.

Make your home more airtight and keep cold air outside:

- Seal leaks around doors, windows and other openings such as pipes or ducts, with caulk or weather-stripping. The most common places where air escapes in homes are floors, walls, ceilings, ducts, fireplaces, plumbing penetrations, doors, windows, fans, vents and electrical outlets.

Discover even more [energy saving tips](#) to help you save energy.

For the latest information on power outages:

- Sign up for [Power Alert Service](#) for information on individual outages;
- Follow [@cnpalerts](#) and visit [Outage Tracker](#) for general outage locations; and
- Visit [CenterPointEnergy's Storm Center](#) for more electric and natural gas safetytips and other resources.