



Power Lines

A monthly newsletter from Columbia River People's Utility District

March 2008

Tips for managing higher winter electric bills

There are a few common reasons that bills increase in the winter - here's what to do about them.

Changes in the Weather

Your heating system is the largest energy user in your home. As the weather gets colder the heating system operates longer, increasing your bill. Since winter weather is unpredictable, so is your utility bill.

What you can do: In the long run the best solution to high heating bills is to insulate your home.



Caulking and weather stripping around doors & windows will reduce air leaks and decrease heating costs.

In the short run your best bet is to set your thermostat as low as comfort permits. Each degree you lower it saves about 3% in space heating costs. Set it even lower when you are away or asleep.

Heating System Malfunctions

If your heating system malfunctions, it could mean longer equipment run times and higher bills. This is particularly true of high efficiency systems like heat pumps. An improperly functioning heat pump operating only on its back-up heat sources can increase heating costs by as much as 40%.

What you can do: Maintain all central heating systems regularly. This is particularly important for high efficiency systems. Have an annual check-up by a qualified technician and clean filters monthly.

Taking a Long Vacation

If your home is empty for extended periods of time during the winter, you won't necessarily use less electricity. Your typical daily activities when you are at home generate a fair amount of heat. When you are gone, the lack of activity means your heating system must work harder to keep the house warm.

What you can do: Set your thermostat at 55 or 60 degrees when you are away.

More People Living in Your Home

If the number of people living in your home increases, your energy use can go up. More people means more showers, cooking and laundry, which can significantly increase your energy use.

What you can do: Take shorter showers and run only full loads of laundry and dishes. Wash laundry in cold water when possible.

Longer Billing Cycles

The length of the billing cycle also affects your total bill. Our billing cycles can range from 28 - 32 days in length. The good news is that when a billing cycle is a little longer one month, it's likely to be a bit shorter the next.

What you can do: Sign up for our Budget Pay Program, which gives you equal monthly payments all year round. The amount of your payment is calculated based on your previous 12 months of usage. Budget Pay is a great way to take the sting out of the winter months when your usage is higher.



24 Hour Outage & Emergency Hot Line: (503) 397-1844 • Email: info@crpud.org
Website: www.crpud.net • Business Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday

GLOW Book Sale

April 1 - 30, 2008

At the PUD Office in Deer Island
8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday - Friday

Proceeds benefit the Neighbor's
GLOW Fund, which provides
emergency bill payment assistance
to PUD customers.

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!

If you plan to dig anywhere on public or private property, Oregon law requires you to call the Utility Notification Center at (800) 332-2344 at least two business days in advance. If you don't call and you damage any utility facilities, you will be liable for repair costs.

For more information, visit www.callbeforeyoudig.org.



Convenient bill payment options for everybody

When you pay your PUD bill each month, do you write a check and send it to us in the mail? That's what most people do, but you have many other options that can make paying your PUD bill simpler and may even save you the cost of a stamp:

Budget Pay

Budget Pay takes the bite out of those high winter heating bills. You pay the same amount each month; your payment amount is based on your average usage over the previous year and is adjusted each spring. You can sign up for Budget Pay in March or April each year.

Power Pay

With Power Pay, your bill is paid automatically each month through a deduction from your bank account. You still receive a monthly statement showing your electric usage and the total amount due, but you won't have to worry about remembering to write a check and mail it in, and you won't need a stamp.

Always Current

Always Current is Power Pay combined with email billing. You receive your PUD statement by email each month, and your bill is paid automatically through a deduction from your bank account.

Account Online

Account Online is a website that gives you instant access to your current bill, account history and other information. You can also pay through Account Online

with a Visa, MasterCard, Discover Card or debit card.

Pay Stations

On your way out to run errands about town? You can pay your PUD bill at Semling's Pharmacy, US Bank or Bank of the West in St. Helens, or at any branch of St. Helens Community Federal Credit Union.



Pay by Phone

You can pay your PUD bill by telephone by calling Customer Accounts at (503) 397-0590 and choosing option #1. You'll need to key in your debit or credit card number, expiration date and security code. Your payment will be charged to your account within two business days.

Sign up for payment options

You can sign up for any of our bill paying options by contacting Customer Accounts at (503) 397-0590 or custsvc@crpud.org, or online at www.crpud.net.

Sign up for *Always Current* - Automatic payment with email billing

Complete this form and return with payment or submit to: Columbia River PUD, PO Box 1193, St. Helens, OR 97051.

****Please include a voided blank check with this form.****

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

PUD Customer Number: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Choose a Password: _____

Add Budget Pay option? (Equal monthly payments, amount calculated each March)

Yes No

Bank Name: _____

Name on Account: _____

Bank Routing #: _____

Bank Account #: _____

Type of Account: Checking Savings

Signed: _____

Date: _____

COLUMBIA RIVER
PUD
A COMMUNITY-OWNED UTILITY