

## How Cold Weather Affects Your Electric Bill

Cold weather makes your heating system work harder, especially if you have older windows, poor insulation, or air leaks. This can increase your energy use and bills.

### Ways to save energy:

- **Lower your thermostat** a few degrees, as each degree can save up to 2% of energy usage. Keep your home at least 55°F to protect pipes.
- **Use space heaters carefully**, they're only for small areas. Choose ones with a UL safety label.
- **Seal drafts** with caulk or weather stripping.
- **Use insulated** curtains or blinds to keep heat in.
- **Check or replace** furnace filters.
- **Improve insulation** or upgrade to a heat pump for better efficiency.

If you're thinking about efficiency upgrades, the PUD offers rebates and programs that can help.



# NECT

JANUARY 2026

## Understanding Your Electric Bill: Demand

Your electric bill isn't just about how much electricity you use, it's also about how fast you use it. That's called Demand, and it's measured in kilowatts (kW).

Demand is the amount of power you need at one time. Large commercial and industrial customers can have big spikes when equipment starts up, so the PUD must build and maintain equipment that can handle those peaks. That's why those customers have a separate demand charge.

Residential customers do not pay a demand charge, but you may still see your demand reading on your bill.

Demand is different from the Service Availability Charge and the Energy Usage Charge (also known as the per kilowatt hour charge):

- **Service Availability Charge:** A flat monthly fee that keeps your home or business connected to the system. It helps pay for poles, wires, transformers, and maintenance.
- **Energy Usage Charge:** The amount of electricity you use over time.

### Think of it this way:

- Service availability = staying connected.
- Energy usage = how much you used.
- Demand = how much power you need at one time.

*Together, these pieces make sure electricity is safe and ready whenever you flip a switch.*

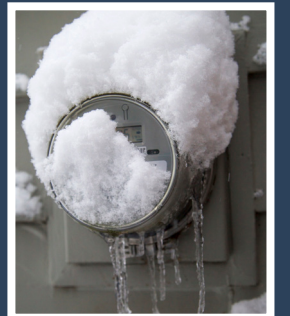


## WINTER IS HERE - PLEASE KEEP YOUR ELECTRIC METER CLEAR!

Snow and ice can be dangerous around your electric meter, water meter, and vents for heating systems. Heavy snow or falling ice can damage equipment or block furnace vents, which can cause carbon monoxide buildup. PUD crews also need clear access to your meter in an emergency.

- Know where your meter and vents are before using a snowblower or plow.
- Never pile snow against your meter or vents.
- Don't use salt or chemicals on your meter.
- Clear snow gently with a broom or your hands.
- Make sure nothing is dripping or falling onto the meter.
- Keep the area visible and easy to access.

A few minutes of attention can help keep your home and our crews safe all season!



# CONNECT

## START THE NEW YEAR WITH A HOME ELECTRICAL SAFETY CHECK

January is a great time to make sure your home is safe. Winter brings more use of heaters, fireplaces, and generators, which increases the risk of electrical fires. A quick check now can help keep your family safe.

### Generator Safety:

1. Let generators run a few minutes before plugging in devices and plug items in one at a time.
2. Only connect a generator to your home through a transfer switch, even if you have an outdoor generator plug-in. Without a transfer switch, plug appliances directly into the generator using a heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cord.
3. Never plug a generator into a wall outlet. Doing so can cause dangerous backfeed, which can injure or kill lineworkers.
4. Never run a generator inside a home, shop, or garage because of deadly carbon monoxide risks.



*A quick New Year safety check can help prevent electrical fires and keep your home safe through the winter months.*

### Heating Equipment Safety:

1. Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet from heaters, furnaces, fireplaces, and wood stoves.
2. Use appliances only as intended.
3. Vent fuel-burning heaters outdoors and keep vents clear.
4. Use screens with fireplaces and wood stoves.
5. Never plug a space heater into an extension cord.
6. Place heaters on flat, level ground away from walkways.



### Arc Fault Safety:

Damaged or overloaded wires can spark fires. AFCI outlets shut off power if they detect unsafe arcing. Check cords for damage, avoid running cords under rugs or behind furniture, and don't overload outlets.

Press the "TEST" button on AFCI outlets or breakers. Flickering lights, buzzing outlets, or strange smells? Call an electrician.



### CONNECT WITH US!

**Main Line:** 509.447.3137  
**North County:** 509.446.3137  
**South County:** 509.242.3137  
**TDD:** 800.833.6388

#### **Commissioners:**

Curt Knapp: cknapp@popud.org 509.671.1111  
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### UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

Tue, Jan 6 - Newport  
Tue, Jan 20 - Newport

#### **Office Closures:**

Thur, Jan 1 - New Year's Day  
Mon, Jan 19 - Martin Luther King Day