

# Your Energy Connection

Rocky Mount Public Utilities' Monthly Newsletter



January 2017

## SAFETY TIPS FOR USING NATURAL GAS

Natural gas is one of the safest forms of energy when used properly. To keep your family safe, remember to follow these important safety tips.

- Set the temperature on water heaters to 110 to 120°F to reduce the possibility of scalding water.
- Have all gas appliances, furnaces, vents, flues, chimneys and gas lines in your home or business inspected every year by qualified industry professionals.
- Keep the areas around all appliances and equipment clean and unblocked to allow for proper air flow.
- Follow manufacturer instructions for the care and use of gas appliances and equipment.
- Make sure there is at least one multipurpose fire extinguisher in your home or place of business.
- DO NOT use your stove or oven for anything other than cooking.
- DO NOT move or install a gas appliance or change the connector in any way without professional assistance.
- DO NOT install a gas appliance yourself. Always seek professional assistance.
- DO NOT store household chemicals or combustible materials near gas appliances.
- Look for the blue flame. If pilot lights and burners have a steady, blue flame, they are operating correctly. *(Some decorative gas logs are designed to have a yellow flame. Please refer to the manufacturer to determine if the gas logs are operating correctly.)*



***A steady, blue flame indicates the natural gas appliance is operating correctly.***

### Carbon Monoxide Hazards

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless and tasteless gas lighter than air. High levels of carbon monoxide can be fatal. Carbon monoxide is a toxic gas produced when fuels such as gasoline, oil, propane, kerosene, coal, wood, and natural gas do not have an adequate supply of oxygen to burn completely.

### Symptoms of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are similar to those of the flu (severe headaches, nausea, vomiting, and sleepiness) without a fever. Those experiencing these symptoms should leave the house and call (252) 467-4800 immediately.

### Sources of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

- Malfunctioning heating equipment
- Blocked chimney
- Indoor use of barbecue grills
- Using cooking appliances for heating purposes
- Sitting inside an idling vehicle for a prolonged period of time
- Repairing or running engines, such as vehicles, lawnmowers and snow blowers, in an attached garage

To prevent potential carbon monoxide poisoning, customers should have their heating and hot water equipment and venting systems inspected annually by a qualified technician. Safe natural gas equipment should show a clear blue flame. A yellow or orange flame may indicate a problem.

Carbon monoxide detectors should be installed throughout the home to monitor the presence of carbon monoxide before it reaches dangerous levels.

For more information about natural gas safety, visit [www.rockymountnc.gov/utilities](http://www.rockymountnc.gov/utilities).

## ANNUAL TREE GIVEAWAY



On March 6-8, 2017, the city of Rocky Mount Tree Advisory Board will be giving away Redbud seedlings in the City Hall atrium located at 331 S. Franklin St.

Low-growing trees that are suitable for planting near power lines are given away annually to help keep Rocky Mount beautiful and to promote proper planting.

The limit is two trees per person while supplies last. For more information, call (252) 467-4856.

### Before Planting Your Tree

Know what's below! Call 811 at least three days before digging to have underground utilities located. This service is free of charge to all excavators.

## STORMWATER FAQs

### What is stormwater runoff?

Stormwater runoff is water from rain or melting snow that "runs off" across the land instead of seeping into the ground. This runoff usually flows into the nearest stream, creek, river, lake or ocean and is not treated in any way.

### How does stormwater runoff become polluted?

Polluted runoff generally is present anywhere people use or alter the land. When the runoff makes its way to bodies of water, it can pick up pollutants along the way. Examples of polluted substances include pesticides, fertilizers, oil, soap, pet waste, grass clippings and leaves. All of these substances in sufficient quantities can harm creeks, rivers and lakes.

### Why must the city manage stormwater runoff?

The city of Rocky Mount is required by the federal and state government to clean stormwater and create a comprehensive, coordinated stormwater management program that addresses the city's stormwater quality and drainage needs.

### What is the stormwater utility fee?

The stormwater fee on customers' utility bills is the funding that pays for the costs of providing stormwater management services. Single-family structures are charged a flat fee of \$5.00. Other developed property owners, such as businesses, industry, multi-family, and tax-exempt properties, are charged \$5.00 per month for every 2,519 square feet of impervious surface on their property. Impervious surfaces, such as parking lots, buildings, driveways, and sidewalks, keep the stormwater from soaking into the ground and create excess runoff.

## TRIVIA – ANSWER FOR A CHANCE TO WIN!

**TRIVIA QUESTION:** What safety devices should be installed near areas that are heated by a fireplace, wood stove or kerosene heater?

Submit answers to [trivia@rockymountnc.gov](mailto:trivia@rockymountnc.gov) or by calling (252) 972-1269 by Friday, February 10. Include your name and address. Five randomly chosen customers with the correct answer will receive a retractable stylus pen.

*December trivia question: "What city of Rocky Mount program helps low income elderly, disabled or recently laid off customers with paying heating expenses?"*

*Answer: Winter Assistance for Rocky Mount (W.A.R.M.) Program*

## TIPS TO KEEP PIPES FROM FREEZING

Pipes that freeze most frequently are those exposed to severe cold and located in unheated interior areas (e.g. basements, crawl spaces, attics, garages, and kitchen cabinets). As temperatures drop, take the following steps to prevent frozen pipes:

- Keep garage doors closed if there are water supply lines in the garage.
- Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing. (*Move any harmful cleaners and household chemicals out of the reach of children.*)
- While you are away, set the thermostat to 50°F or warmer.
- Insulate pipes in your home's crawl spaces and attic.
- Disconnect garden hoses from outside faucets.
- Let water trickle from the hot and cold spigot on the faucet.



### CONTACT US

Customer Service .....(252) 972-1250  
 Bill payment .....1-866-288-7608  
 Start/stop services .....(252) 972-1250  
 Utility emergencies .....(252) 467-4800

### CUSTOMER SERVICE HOURS

Monday-Thursday: 8:30 a.m.-7 p.m.;  
 Friday: 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

[www.rockymountnc.gov/utilities](http://www.rockymountnc.gov/utilities)

