

## FALL BILL ASSISTANCE

This is the time of year when we become more reliant on natural gas to keep our homes comfortable. For those struggling to pay their gas bill, there are several payment plan options available to all customers. There are specialty programs available for customers meeting income eligibility requirements as well. Further, the Winter Reconnect Order will go into effect October 18. Customers whose service has been shut off because of non-payment, or who have received a shutoff notice, can reconnect for \$175 plus a reconnection fee, no matter how much is owed. The order runs through April 25, 2022. Visit [ColumbiaGasOhio.com](http://ColumbiaGasOhio.com) or call 1-800-344-4077 to learn more about all forms of available assistance.

*If you know someone struggling to pay or falling behind on their gas bill but may be hesitant to ask for help, please encourage them to reach out to Columbia Gas today.*

## NO-COST ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Income-eligible homeowners and renters may qualify for a complete home energy inspection, including a safety check of their natural gas appliances and no-cost, energy savings upgrades through the Columbia Gas WarmChoice® program.

To learn more go to [ColumbiaGasOhio.com/WarmChoice](http://ColumbiaGasOhio.com/WarmChoice) or call your local WarmChoice provider, Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development at 800-807-9781.

## FALL SAFETY MESSAGES

### Stop. Leave. Call

Natural gas is safe and reliable but for a variety of reasons, leaks can sometimes occur. Columbia Gas adds an odorant called mercaptan to give natural gas its distinctive sulfur-like rotten egg scent. If you suspect a leak, STOP what you're doing, LEAVE the area immediately and from a safe place CALL 911 and Columbia Gas at 1-800-344-4077. Crews will respond quickly to ensure everything is safe. Even if you aren't sure what you are smelling is a gas leak, always err on the side of caution and call. Potential leaks should never be ignored and there is no charge for gas leak investigations.



In some cases, you can also identify natural gas by sight or sound. If you see blowing dirt, bubbling water or dead vegetation, or hear a hissing/roaring sound, there could be a leak, so remember to STOP, LEAVE and CALL.

### Carbon Monoxide

As summer transitions into fall and eventually winter, it's important to remember the colder months are a peak time for carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. CO is an odorless, tasteless and colorless gas created when fuels burn incompletely. Although natural gas doesn't contain CO, it can

be produced when there's not enough oxygen present for natural gas, oil, or any other fuel to burn properly.

The only way to know whether you have a buildup of CO is to have fully functioning CO detectors (some double as smoke detectors) at home, especially in every area where someone sleeps. Be sure to test the detectors monthly and replace the batteries every six months. If the CO detectors sounds, or if you are experiencing [symptoms](#) of CO poisoning, STOP what you are doing, LEAVE the area immediately and from a safe place CALL 911 and Columbia Gas at 1-800-344-4077.



### Work Zone Safety

With dozens of pipeline projects underway at any given time, Columbia Gas reminds all motorists to follow good safety practices in work zones. When driving through or near work zones, drive smart for your safety and the safety of workers. Staying alert, slowing down and minimizing distractions are keys to personal safety and the safety of crews. Following these simple tips just may save a life:

- *Expect the unexpected* – Normal speed limits may be reduced; traffic lanes may change; and people may be working on or near the road.
- *Slow down* – Speeding is one of the major causes of work zone crashes.
- *Keep your distance* – Keep a safe distance between you and the car ahead of you, and don't tailgate.
- *Obey road crew flaggers* – A flagger has the same authority as a regulatory sign, so motorists can be cited for disobeying his or her directions.

## FIGHTING HUNGER ACROSS OHIO

The Mid-Ohio Food Collective's latest reports indicate a more than 40% increase in new families coming to them or their partner agencies for food. Since the beginning of this year, Columbia Gas has made numerous charitable contributions through the NiSource Charitable Foundation to local non-profits dedicated to helping customers and neighbors struggling with hunger. Examples of partnerships include supporting the Mid-Ohio Food Collective's efforts to provide enough food for more than 150,000 meals a day, as well as Second Harvest Foodbank of North Central Ohio's contactless, drive-through mobile pantries.



Any nonprofit battling food insecurity across the Columbia Gas service area should visit [columbiagasohio.com/columbiacares](http://columbiagasohio.com/columbiacares) to learn more about the grant process and potential partnerships.