

New Guidelines Regarding Disposal of Compact Fluorescent Bulbs

With the surge in CFL sales has come increasing public awareness about the mercury content in CFLs and concerns about proper disposal. Although CFLs contain relatively small amounts of mercury, proper disposal practices are still necessary when the bulbs burn out or break.

Intact CFLs pose no threat of mercury exposure and provide important benefits in reduced energy use (and lower energy costs for consumers), reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and reduced local air pollution (particulate and other pollutants) from electric power generation.

How should I dispose of a CFL bulb when it burns out?

CFL bulbs are designed to outlast traditional incandescent light bulbs by many years. But when a CFL bulb does burn out, special considerations must be taken in its disposal. As of May 1, 2008, Massachusetts law prohibits disposal of products containing mercury, including CFLs, with household trash. Intact CFLs that have burned out or are no longer wanted should be recycled through Municipal & Commercial Drop-Off Locations for Mercury-Added Product Recycling. In Holyoke, the Department of Public Works (DPW) accepts CFL bulbs from homeowners and those that dwell in multi-family buildings of four units or less as part of their special hazardous waste collection program. Commercial businesses and occupants of larger multifamily buildings should contact their waste disposal company for guidance in the proper disposal of these items.

What should I do if a CFL bulb breaks?

Consumers should handle CFLs carefully to avoid breakage, and refrain from using CFLs in lamps that can be knocked over easily, or in unprotected fixtures where bulbs are particularly at risk of being broken in the presence of young children, as in play spaces.

If a CFL bulb does break, following these steps will protect you and others from possible cuts from the broken glass and from potential exposure to mercury vapors that can be released.

DO NOT USE A VACUUM OR BROOM TO CLEAN UP A BROKEN CFL

1. Children, pregnant women and pets should stay away from the area until you complete the cleanup.
2. Be careful not to step in the area where the bulb broke, and if feasible, open windows or doors to the outdoors to ventilate. If you have a fan, use it to blow air directly out the window. Leave the area for 15 minutes prior to cleaning up the broken bulb. Close any interior doors to the area.
3. To clean up the broken CFL use disposable gloves if available (do not use your bare hands). If you do not have disposable gloves, cover your hands with a plastic bag or use a paper towel to protect your hands from broken glass.
4. Using stiff paper (index cards, thin cardboard) carefully scoop up the CFL fragments and any visible powder, being careful not to get them on your clothing. Place the collected fragments into a disposable container that the broken glass will not rip, such as an empty rigid plastic food container or brown paper bag.
5. Using sticky tape, (like duct, packing or masking tape) pick up any small particles of the broken CFL. Go over the area, pressing the tape onto the surface, even if you do not see any pieces or powder. Place the used tape into the disposable container.
6. Using wet wipes or moist paper towels, wipe the area to pick up any residual glass and powder and place used towels and disposable gloves into the disposable container.
7. Place the disposable container into a plastic bag that you can tie off at the top (to keep the contents inside) and take it out to an outdoor trash bin right away. Dispose of this container in accordance with State and Local waste disposal guidelines for mercury-containing products.
8. Even after clean up of a broken bulb, some mercury that you cannot see may remain in carpeting. If the carpet is in an area where young children or pregnant women may be exposed, it is advisable to cut out and replace the section of the carpet where the breakage occurred in order to remove any residual mercury. For other situations or for additional guidance, call the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) at 617-292-5500 or the Bureau of Environmental Health in the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) at 617-624-5757.
9. Ventilate the room to the outdoors for several hours after the clean up, if possible, to ensure mercury vapors have cleared. If available, continue to use a fan to blow air out the window.
10. Keep children and pets away from the spot where the CFL broke for several days.

Information courtesy of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)



Mainlines

MARCH/APRIL 2008

A newsletter for the customers of the Holyoke Gas & Electric Department

Important Information About Your HG&E Utility Rates

As you can see from the rate comparison graphs below, HG&E offers its customers some of the lowest electric and natural gas rates in New England.

As you are probably aware, recent global economic developments have caused the price of crude oil to reach unprecedented levels. You have probably already begun to see the effects of these increases at the gasoline pump.

In sync with oil prices, the wholesale prices for the natural gas we deliver to your home have also risen to near-historic levels. Since the wholesale cost of electricity in New England is primarily driven by the cost of natural gas, the increase in natural gas prices is putting upward pressure on the cost of electricity as well.

Although HG&E's hydroelectric generation resources provide the City with a significant source of clean and low-cost power that is isolated from the oil and natural gas price spikes, a significant amount of energy sold by HG&E is purchased through contracts that are impacted by the market increases and the wholesale market.

Other utilities in the Commonwealth have already increased rates to keep pace with the rising cost of energy. Absent of a significant market downward correction, there will be continued upward pressure on natural gas and electric rates, and potentially increases to your rates. We will keep posted of the market developments and any impact on your rates.

Please watch this newsletter over the coming months for more information on this topic as it evolves.

Electric Rate Comparison

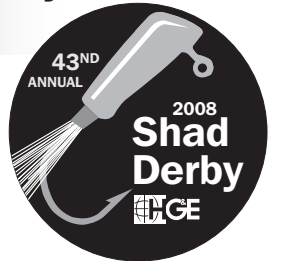
March 2008 - Residential customer consuming 500 kwh per month. Amounts shown include all discounts and use the fixed default generation supply price.

HG&E	\$56.30	
National Grid	\$82.94	+47%
Western Mass Electric	\$86.99	+54%

2008 HG&E Shad Derby May 10-11, 17-18

Fishing Tournament!
Open to everyone!
Prizes! Trophies!

Sponsored by
Holyoke Gas & Electric



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
OUR WEBSITE AT: www.hged.com/shadderby

HG&E Barrett Fishway Opens on May 7th - FREE TOURS!

2008 Fishlift Schedule

Open May 7 through June 15
Wednesday - Sunday • 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Located at the Holyoke Dam - turn left just before Route 116 bridge to South Hadley

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
OUR WEBSITE AT: www.hged.com/fishlift

Is your family on the HG&E Budget Plan?

The Budget Plan program helps equalize high winter heating bills over a twelve month period. An enrollment form is included inside of this newsletter.



Natural Gas Rate Comparison

March 2008 - Residential heating customer consuming 192 ccf per month. (1376 ccf annual consumption) Amounts shown include all discounts.

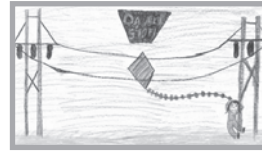
HG&E	\$281.72	
Baystate Gas	\$301.33	+7%
Berkshire Gas	\$328.40	+17%

HG&E Sponsors Safety Poster Contest

In conjunction with an educational safety program, HG&E sponsored a poster contest in March that drew entries from hundreds of 3rd grade children in Holyoke Schools. Winners received a Target gift card from HG&E for their excellent work.

Seven of the winning posters are shown in this newsletter, and all 26 winning entries are on display at our Suffolk Street offices or can be viewed on our website at:

www.hged.com/postercontest



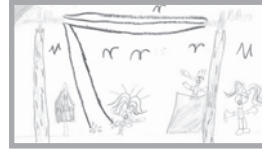
Jordyn M. - Grade 3, Mater Dolorosa School



Jack M. - Grade 3, Blessed Sacrament School



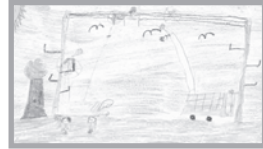
Victor - Grade 3, Kelly School



Tiffany T. - Grade 3, Morgan School



Justin B. - Grade 3, Donahue School



Emmari E. - Grade 3, McMahon School



Jesus C. - Grade 3, Lawrence School

Looking to save energy? (and money)

visit our website at:
www.hged.com/conserve
to learn more about
our special energy
conservation programs



before you dig...

make the call to
(888) DIG-SAFE



Attention excavators, contractors and homeowners: Did you know Federal and State law requires that you contact Dig Safe before digging, trenching, landscaping, or performing any other excavation or earth moving operation? Dig safe and dig smart this Spring by making a toll-free call to (888) DIG-SAFE before you start.

**Dig safe.
It's the law.**

on-line at: www.digsafe.com

Dig Safe is a free service funded by member utility companies. There is no charge for you to use this service.

An electrical surge can cost you plenty.



HG&E can help protect your home from power surges.

What happens in an instant but can be felt for many years to come? It's a dangerous electrical surge - most often from a lightning strike and it has the potential to destroy your family's valuable electrical equipment. Imagine your computer, TV, VCR, microwave, washer, dryer, and refrigerator all being suddenly destroyed. The cost in repair or replacement, plus programming or data, can be staggering.

Meterbase surge suppression device from just \$3.75/month.

Fortunately, the Holyoke Gas and Electric Department offers a simple solution to this potential problem - Meterbase Surge Suppression Service. Installed by HG&E and mounted into your electric meter socket, this service stops electrical surges from ever even entering your home and causing any damage. Ordering is easy and the low monthly charge is conveniently added to your existing HG&E utility bill.

Just contact Jeff Brouillard at (413) 536-9358 or e-mail him at jbrouillard@hged.com to enroll.

note: meter-based surge suppression is only available at locations which receive their electric service from HG&E

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Travel the Silk Road to Wistariahurst
Friday April 11th 2008 • 6pm - 9pm

Wistariahurst invites you to take part in the annual spring gala event to benefit the museum at 238 Cabot Street in Holyoke.

Tickets are \$25 in advance or \$35 at the door. For information or tickets, please call the Museum at (413) 322-5660

The evening will feature:

Asian Artifact Exhibition • Silent Auction

Cultural Music • Culinary Demonstrations of Asian Foods

Cuisine prepared & Served by Students of the Culinary Arts Program at Holyoke Community College

A Reminder for Gas Customers:

The exhaust and combustion air vents of gas appliances can become clogged by excessive amounts of snow or ice. This blockage can create an unsafe condition and the possible accumulation of Carbon Dioxide (CO) in buildings and homes. Please check and clear your exhaust vents regularly during winter weather.

Information provided by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Association (PHMSA)

Are wintertime heating bills upsetting your budget?



It seems as if everyone dreads high winter energy bills. But now, Holyoke Gas & Electric has a solution that makes heating costs easier to manage. HG&E's budget plan divides your bills into twelve monthly payments, thereby making household budgeting simple. This year, be smart and plan ahead for next winter by joining HG&E's budget plan right now.

Signing up is easy, just return the form on the back of this flyer with your monthly HG&E bill payment and we'll send you more information about the Budget Plan accompanied by a quote of what your monthly HG&E Budget Plan payment would be.

How do we calculate the estimated cost?

The estimated cost is determined from previous utility bills or is calculated by our engineers. The estimated cost is then divided into 12 equal monthly payments, to start with your June billing. Your Budget Plan payment will then be reviewed after the January billing and will be automatically adjusted if necessary.

► Complete the form on the right and return to HG&E with your bill payment by April 30th.

Am I eligible to enroll in the Budget Plan program?

All Holyoke Gas & Electric customers are already eligible to participate in the Budget Plan at no additional cost.

Note: Your account must have a \$0 balance and your location must have one year of billing history to enroll in the program.

See to the left of this form for additional information on the Budget Plan Program.

Send in this form for a free estimate.

Please send more information. There is no obligation to enroll.

- We're currently on the budget plan and wish to continue this service.
- We're interested in the budget plan. Please tell us what our monthly payment would be. (must have a \$0 account balance and one year of billing history at this location)
- We're interested in direct payment withdrawal. Please send information.

I currently heat my home with:

- Gas
- Electricity
- Other

Account information:

name _____

service address _____

HG&E account # _____

cycle / route # (from your monthly bill) _____

telephone number _____

► Please return to this form to HG&E by April 30th

CLIP AND RETURN WITH YOUR BILL ✂