



**A Guide
To Help Manage
Your Utility Services**

Missouri Public Service Commission

1-800-392-4211

www.psc.mo.gov

A Message From Chairman Kevin Gunn



More than ever before, customers are looking for ways to become more energy efficient and save on their monthly utility bills. The Public Service Commission (PSC) believes that it is an important message and we appreciate your interest in this publication.

Inside this booklet, you will find information on energy conservation; emergency preparedness; the PSC Cold Weather Rule; electric and natural gas safety; telephone assistance for low income and disabled Missourians; and how the PSC can help consumers with service and billing issues.

Turning off unused lights, replacing dirty furnace filters, making sure that vents are not blocked by furniture

or drapes and caulking around doors and windows are just some of the many low cost and no cost actions that can really make a difference on your monthly utility bills.

In addition to this publication, I invite you to visit the PSC's website (www.psc.mo.gov) or the website jointly presented by the PSC and the Department of Natural Resources (www.beenergyefficient.org) for additional consumer information.

The PSC's website is also a great place to follow any case before the Commission. With just a click, you can view testimony filed in cases as well as watch formal case hearings from Jefferson City. When the Commission is deciding a case, our website offers you a front row seat at the PSC agenda meetings where that decision is being made.

Our process can be complicated even for seasoned practitioners before our Commission, but the process is an important one to understand. We are always looking for additional ways to bridge the communications gap between our agency and the general public.

I hope that you find the information in this booklet useful. If you have a complaint against your utility company or need information regarding your utility service, please call our Consumer Services Department at 1-800-392-4211.

Missouri Public Service Commission
200 Madison Street
P.O. Box 360
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0360

The Missouri Public Service Commission

Created in 1913, the Public Service Commission (PSC) has the statutory responsibility of ensuring that private investor-owned utility consumers receive safe and adequate service at just and reasonable rates. The approved rates must provide the utility's shareholders the opportunity to earn a reasonable return on their investment.



Chairman Kevin Gunn was appointed to the Missouri Public Service Commission on March 13, 2008, by Governor Matt Blunt. He was confirmed by the Missouri State Senate on April 10, 2008 and sworn in on April 21, 2008. He was named chairman in February 2011 by Governor Jay Nixon. Prior to his appointment to the PSC, Gunn was an attorney in private law practice in St. Louis with the law firm of Sonnenschein, Nath and Rosenthal.



Commissioner Robert M. Clayton III was appointed by Governor Bob Holden to a six-year term on the Public Service Commission, receiving Senate confirmation on May 8, 2003. He served as chairman from January 2009 until February 2011. Clayton formerly served in the Missouri General Assembly as the state representative from the 10th District. He was first elected to the Missouri House in 1994 and served four consecutive terms.



Commissioner Jeff Davis was appointed to the Missouri Public Service Commission on April 30, 2004. He was re-appointed to a full six-year term in April 2006. He served as chairman from 2005 until January of 2009. Prior to his appointment to the Commission, Davis served as General Counsel and Chief of Staff for Missouri Senate President Pro Tem Peter Kinder.



Commissioner Terry Jarrett was appointed by Governor Matt Blunt to the Missouri Public Service Commission for a six-year term on September 11, 2007. Prior to his appointment to the PSC, Jarrett was the Presiding Commissioner of the Administrative Hearing Commission. He formerly served as general counsel to Matt Blunt in both the Office of the Governor and the Office of the Secretary of State.



Commissioner Robert S. Kenney was appointed to the Missouri Public Service Commission on July 29, 2009 by Governor Jay Nixon. He was unanimously confirmed by the Missouri State Senate on January 13, 2010. Prior to his appointment, Commissioner Kenney served as Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster's first Chief of Staff. Before working for the attorney general, he was a shareholder at the St. Louis law firm Polsinelli Shalton Flanigan Suelthaus PC (now Polsinelli Shughart).



This booklet was produced by the Public Information and Regulatory Policy Office of the Missouri Public Service Commission.

Some of the key sources used in the preparing of this text include the U.S. Department of Energy, U. S. Energy Information Administration and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

What's Inside

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| General Information..... | 7 |
| How to Get Service | |
| What's on Your Bill | |
| Budget Billing | |
| Disconnection of Service | |
| Changing Service When Moving | |
| Your Home's Energy Use | |
| Be Prepared In Case Of An Emergency | |
| Setting Your Thermostat | |
| Electricity..... | 15 |
| The Cost of Electricity | |
| Be Safe Around Electricity | |
| Tree Limbs and Power Lines | |
| Conserve Energy While Cooking | |
| Summer Energy Saving Tips | |
| Natural Gas..... | 22 |
| Facts About Natural Gas Prices | |
| If You Smell Natural Gas | |
| Call Before You Dig | |
| Getting Ready For The Heating Season | |
| The Cold Weather Rule | |
| Water & Sewer..... | 28 |
| Saving Water Can Save You Money | |
| Household Water Saving Tips | |
| Maintenance Tips | |
| Bathroom Plumbing Problems | |
| Other Sources of Leaks | |
| Telecommunications..... | 33 |
| Assistance Programs | |
| Relay Missouri | |
| Captioned Telephone Services | |
| Resources..... | 36 |

How To Get Service

What Information Will I Have To Provide?



- ✓ Your Name and Proof of Identification (driver's license or birth certificate).
- ✓ The address where service is to be provided. Mailing address if different from address where service is to be provided.
- ✓ A telephone number where you can be reached. (Sometimes a utility company will require verification of employment, so your employer's name and work phone number may be needed.)

Will I Have To Pay A Deposit?

Applying for and obtaining utility service is entering into a contract. Some of the information the utility company may ask for is the same as applying for credit. Information about your employment, record of prior utility service and income may be requested to allow the utility company to determine whether or not a security deposit will be required.



Utility providers may require a deposit to begin service if you cannot meet certain credit standards. The amount of the security deposit varies from company to company. If you are unable to pay the full deposit, you may request to pay it in installments. In most cases, deposits are refunded once satisfactory credit has been established or if you close your account.

Some companies accept a written guarantee of payment by an existing customer with good credit instead of a cash deposit.

What's On Your Utility Bill

ADDRESS WHERE SERVICE IS PROVIDED -- This is usually your primary residence.

YOUR ACCOUNT NUMBER -- A code used by the utility to identify customers' accounts.

PAYMENT DUE DATE -- The date when payment must be made. (The bill may include a "past due" date indicating when the payment will be considered late and a late payment charge that will be assessed.)



NUMBER OF DAYS IN BILLING CYCLE -- The number of days between meter readings. This is the number of days in the present billing period. Billing periods may vary a few days because of different reading schedules.

METER READINGS -- Your bill is based on the meter readings obtained by the utility. If the utility is unable to read the meter, you will receive a bill based on an estimated reading. In most cases, the estimated bill is based on past usage during the same time the previous year, as well as, current weather conditions. The utility is required to note on the bill whether the bill is based on an actual or estimated reading.

PRIOR CHARGES -- Your bill will also include charges that appeared on the previous month's statement, the amount that was paid, and when the payment was received.

BUDGET BILLING OR FIXED PAYMENT PLAN -- If you are on a "budget billing" or "level pay" plan, your monthly utility bill will usually outline the status of the account.

STATE, COUNTY, CITY TAXES and FRANCHISE FEES-- Amount of taxes due to the State of Missouri and the local municipality or county in which you reside. Some utilities are also charged a municipal business license fee, which is listed separately on the bill. **The PSC does not set these fees.**

Managing Your Bill

Questions About Budget Billing

What Is Budget Billing?

Budget billing is an optional payment program that allows you to pay the same amount each month for your electricity or natural gas use. This monthly amount is typically based on your use the last 12 months.



What Is An Advantage Of Budget Billing?

Budget billing gives you more certainty about what your electric or natural gas bill will be each month.

Can My Budget Billing Amount Be Adjusted During The Year?

Yes. Your account is reviewed periodically. Your actual use may cause your budget plan payment to go up or down for the next budget billing period.



How Do I Sign Up For Budget Billing?

Contact your utility provider to see what type of plans it offers. In most cases, the only requirement is that you pay your bill on time. Customers may choose to leave budget billing at any time.

Contact your utility provider for more information as plans and guidelines vary by company.

If Your Service Is Disconnected

Your utility company can **SHUT OFF** your service if you **FAIL** to:

- PAY YOUR BILL
- FOLLOW THROUGH ON PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS
- PAY A DEPOSIT, IF REQUIRED
- ALLOW THE COMPANY ACCESS TO ITS EQUIPMENT



Before your service is shut off, your utility company must:

- Send you a notice that you are going to be shut off and what you will need to do to restore service. (Different companies have different policies about shutting off service.)
- Attempt to contact you in person prior to your shut off date.
- Place a hang-tag on your door, warning you of possible shut off.

During winter months (November 1 through March 31), the PSC Cold Weather Rule is in effect and service cannot be disconnected when the temperature is forecasted to drop below 32 degrees.

Shutting Off Service Without Notice

Your utility company can **SHUT OFF YOUR SERVICE WITHOUT GIVING YOU NOTICE** for the following reasons:

- THEFT OF SERVICE
- FRAUDULENT APPLICATION FOR SERVICE
- METER TAMPERING
- UNSAFE SERVICE CONDITIONS

Changing Service When You Move

Call your electric, natural gas, sewer, water, and local and long distance telephone companies and tell them where and when the service should be stopped. Keep a record of the date, time and person(s) you talked to at the company. While it is not required, you may want to contact the company several weeks before you move.



Before you move in, contact the new companies that serve that location and make sure a final meter reading was taken for the previous occupant. (Deposits, plus interest, are generally applied to the final bill so any credit balance remaining is refunded to the consumer.)

Contact your local and long distance telephone companies and set up your accounts and calling plans for your new location. Remember, there may be fees for setting up new lines.

If you switch long distance companies or calling plans, contact the new company to verify that the change is in effect. If you have several phone lines in your home or business, confirm that the switch has been made on all lines.

If the bill is in your name, YOU are responsible

Do not rely on others to take utility service out of your name. You will be responsible for an account that has not been closed. Don't forget to contact all utility companies that provide you service.

Your Home's Energy Use

Did you know the typical U.S. family spends close to \$2,000 per year on its home's utility bills?

About 44% of our energy use is for heating and cooling; 33% goes toward lighting and other appliances; 14% for water heating and 9% to operate the refrigerator.



Making your home more energy efficient will not only save you money, but can also improve the value of your home. Energy conservation helps reduce air pollution and conserves natural resources.

A Simple Home Audit Could Save You Money

- ✓ Check for holes or cracks around walls, ceilings, windows, doors, light and plumbing fixtures. These openings can leak air in or out of your home.
- ✓ Check if your appliances and heating and cooling systems are properly maintained. Replace or clean filters as needed.
- ✓ Check the chimney. If you have a fireplace or wood stove, keep the flue damper closed when it is not in use.
- ✓ Check and clean warm-air registers and cold-air returns. Make sure they are not blocked by furniture, carpeting or drapes.

Be Prepared In Case of an Emergency

- ✓ Stock up on non-perishable food (such as canned meats and vegetables).
- ✓ Keep a flashlight, working radio, extra batteries, and candles on hand.
- ✓ Keep a supply of drinking water in case the water supply is contaminated.
- ✓ Keep a list of phone numbers for police, fire and emergency personnel.
- ✓ Develop an evacuation plan in case you have to leave your home.
- ✓ Call relatives or emergency officials if you need a place to stay.
- ✓ If someone in your home is dependent on electric-powered, life-sustaining medical equipment, check with your utility provider about back-up power sources.
- ✓ Make arrangements for the care of infants, the elderly or disabled.
- ✓ Keep your car fueled in case there is a need to evacuate the area.
- ✓ Keep a basic landline phone (without an answering machine) to use if the power goes out.



Energy Saving Tips

Setting Your Thermostat

► You can easily save energy in the winter by setting the thermostat to a comfortable temperature when you're at home and awake, and lowering it to a cooler, but acceptable, temperature when you're asleep or away.



► In the summer, you can follow the same plan with central air conditioning by keeping your house warmer than normal when you are away, and lowering the thermostat setting to a more comfortable temperature only when you are at home.

Seniors and people with special medical needs should check with their doctors before changing their normal home temperatures or turning off air conditioning or heating units.

MYTH: A furnace works harder than normal to warm the space back to a comfortable temperature after the thermostat has been set back, resulting in little or no savings.



FACT: The fuel required to reheat a building to a comfortable temperature is roughly equal to the fuel saved as the building drops to the lower temperature. You save fuel between the time that the temperature stabilizes at the lower level and the next time heat is needed.

MYTH: The higher you raise a thermostat, the more heat the furnace will put out, or the house will warm up faster if the thermostat is raised higher.

FACT: Furnaces put out the same amount of heat no matter how high the thermostat is set — the variable is how long it must stay on to reach the set temperature.

Electricity

The Cost of Electricity

▶ Appliances (including refrigerators and lights) use the largest amount of electricity in the average U.S. household -- approximately two-thirds of the power consumed by residential users.

▶ Heating water uses a large amount of power. For example, when you take a shower or run a load of clothes in the washer, the electric water heater might run for an hour reheating the water in the tank. On average, the water heater is on for about three hours a day.

Some Examples

Hair dryer (1,200 watts) - 10 cents per hour

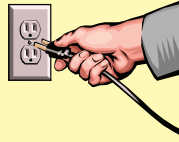
Heat pump or central air (15,000 watts) - \$1.20 per hour

Water heater or clothes dryer (4,000 watts) - 32 cents per hour

Refrigerator (1,000 watts) - 8 cents per hour

Space heater (1,500 watts) - 12 cents per hour

(Figures are based on 8.03 cents/kWh rate)



Did You Know?

The dollar amount on your electric bill is based on the number of kilowatt-hours (kWhs) used.

One kilowatt-hour is the equivalent of using 1,000 watts for one hour or using a 100-watt light bulb for 10 hours.

Electricity



Each year about 1,000 people die from electricity related accidents.

Be Safe Around Electricity

- ▶ Electricity always tries to travel to ground so it can complete a circuit. If a person is standing on the ground and comes in contact with a power source, a circuit will be completed.
- ▶ Many power lines are not insulated. Even lines that are insulated can be dangerous.
- ▶ Notice where power lines are around your home and avoid going near them.
- ▶ Contact your utility about trees and shrubs that may be planted around power lines.
- ▶ Contact your local utility company if you notice anything out of the ordinary that may be a potential hazard.
- ▶ Do-it-yourself utility projects can be dangerous. If you have a problem or project that involves power lines, notify the appropriate utility company.

Electricity

Tree Limbs and Power Lines

Every year in Missouri, people are injured when they climb or prune trees near power lines. High-voltage lines are not insulated, and direct contact results in electrocution.



A tree touching a power line can also become energized, causing injury if someone comes in contact with it. Children should never climb or play around trees that touch power lines.

Electric utilities routinely inspect trees near their lines and schedule maintenance for the high-voltage lines on easements. The utility will prune the tree and determine the required clearance based on a number of factors, including the voltage on the line and the type of tree. Do not prune your own trees near high-voltage power lines. Contact your electric utility.

Property owners are responsible for trimming trees near low-voltage, insulated lines that connect the high-voltage lines to the customer's electric meter. Ask your electric utility to identify these wires and have power temporarily disconnected so that pruning can be done safely.

Do not plant trees that will grow as tall as the power lines under the power lines.

Electricity

Conserve Energy While Cooking and Cleaning

▶ Use your microwave, toaster oven or slow cooker. They use half the energy of a regular oven and will keep your kitchen cooler.



▶ If you cook on a stove, cover pans and use exhaust fans periodically to reduce indoor humidity.

▶ Wash clothes in cold water with a cold water detergent. If washing less than a full load, set the water level to suit the size of the load -- you'll save energy and water.

▶ Dry laundry on a line to avoid using the clothes dryer.

▶ Put the laundry in the dryer when its almost dry. Add a sheet of fabric softener to take out the stiffness in the clothes. Clean the lint filter in the dryer after every use.



▶ Try to wash only full loads in the dishwasher and use the short cycle. Except for the dirtiest dishes, short cycles work just as well but use less energy.

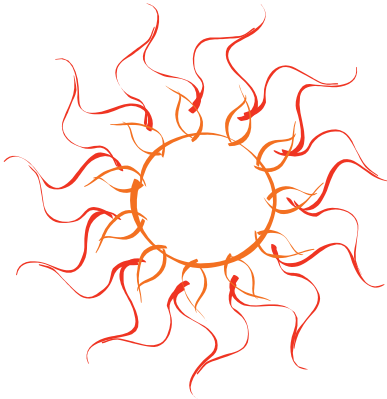
▶ Clothes dryers and dishwashers produce a lot of heat. Use them in the early morning or the late evening, not in the heat of the day.

Electricity

Summer Energy Saving Tips

Consider using a programmable thermostat to raise the temperature when no one is home.

Turn down the temperature on your water heater to no more than 115 degrees.



Keep storm windows and doors in place to reduce the air conditioning load.

Vacuum the coils of your refrigerator, and check for frost buildup in refrigerators and freezers. These cause the appliance to work harder.

Don't overload an electric circuit with high-wattage appliances. The normal limit for an electric circuit of 15 amps is 1600 watts. Overloaded circuits can blow fuses or trip circuit breakers and can be dangerous.

Avoid using extension cords with appliances. This cuts the efficiency of the equipment.

Be Energy



-- Don't constantly move the thermostat up or down throughout the day because this will waste money and energy.

-- Make sure furniture and drapes are not blocking vents in your home or apartment.

-- Close off rooms that are not in use to save on heating and cooling bills.

-- Clean or replace filters on your air conditioner and/or furnace as needed.

www.beenergyefficient.org

How We

PSC consumer services specialists can help you with the following types of problems:

- improper termination of your utility service
- incorrect or unauthorized charges on your utility bill
- problems with reading your meter
- customer deposits for utility services
- poor quality of service
- high bill complaints
- problems with delayed connection of service
- problems with back billing

Call 800-392-4211 for

www.psc.mo.gov

Efficient

-- Turn off the lights when they are not needed. Consider replacing burned out bulbs with fluorescent bulbs.

-- Use ceiling fans to assist in cooling in the summer. Blades should rotate counter-clockwise when viewed from below.

-- Turn down the temperature on the water heater to 115 degrees to save energy costs.

-- Do not use extension cords when operating appliances. This could cause a fire hazard.



Can Help You

The PSC Consumer Services Department cannot help with problems involving:

- wireless telephones, Internet providers, slamming
- cable television
- municipal gas and electric systems
- propane gas
- rural electric cooperatives or municipal electric systems
- municipal water and/or sewer systems, public water supply districts or public sewer districts

Water quality issues are regulated by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

More Information Assistance

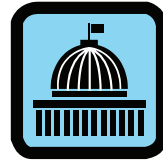
1-800-392-4211

Natural Gas

Facts About Natural Gas Pricing

The amount a wholesale supplier charges your local natural gas company is not regulated by the government.

Congress deregulated natural gas over a decade ago. Now prices are determined in an open, competition-based market.



Your local natural gas company **must make a filing with the Public Service Commission** to increase or decrease your natural gas rates to reflect wholesale price changes. The role of the Missouri Public Service Commission is limited to making sure those price changes match the actual cost of natural gas. The Commission does not regulate wholesale supplier rates.



Wholesale prices are subject to wide variations depending on a number of factors including supply, demand and weather. **Weather extremes (colder or warmer than normal) tend to drive natural gas prices upward.**

Natural Gas

If You Smell Natural Gas

Evacuate the building immediately.

Do not operate electrical switches.

Do not smoke, use lighters, matches or any other open flame.

Do not start your vehicle if it is in an attached garage.

Leave your home and call your local natural gas utility to report the odor and its approximate location.

Do not make a call from inside your house. Calling from any phone inside your home could create a spark that could cause an explosion.

Other Tips

If your service is disrupted for any reason, please make sure that a trained professional relights your pilot flames.

The Odor

Natural gas itself does not have an odor -- an odorant has been added so gas can be detected if a leak occurs. The odor is similar to the smell of "rotten eggs."

Natural Gas

Call Before You Dig

MAKE THE CALL: Many utility company facilities, including natural gas pipelines, are located underground and out of sight. If you are planning any excavation work, from digging in your yard to a commercial project, Missouri law requires you to notify the Missouri One Call System at 1-800-DIG-RITE (1-800-344-7483) or dial 811, at least three but not more than 10 working days in advance, except in the case of an emergency.



After you make the call, Missouri law requires that all utilities with underground facilities affected by the excavation determine if the planned dig is near any underground facilities. If needed, they will survey and mark the area where utility lines are located. Do not begin digging until all of the utilities in the area have been located and marked.

RESPECT THE MARKS: After it is determined that markings are required, the facility owner will dispatch personnel who will locate and mark the excavation site with paint, stakes or flags. Utilities mark their facilities according to specific guidelines and color codes. Respect the markings when you dig.

DIG SAFELY: Digging carelessly can cause disruption of vital utility services, environmental damage, or even the loss of life.

Dig Safe. Dig Smart. Know Missouri's Ground Rules.

Natural Gas

Take Steps To Get Ready For The Heating Season

Examine ways to cut down on energy use. Contact your utility company for home energy audits and suggestions to make your home and business more energy efficient. Have the furnace checked and tuned-up, if needed. Replace filters regularly.

Caulk and place weatherstripping on doors and windows that leak air. Add attic insulation if necessary.

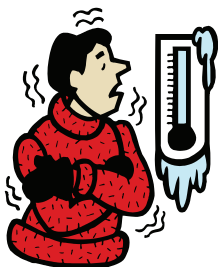
Ask your utility company if you are eligible for weatherization assistance.



You may want to talk to your local utility company about a “budget” or “level” billing plan. Many Missouri gas and electric companies have other programs to assist their customers in paying their energy bills. In most cases, companies will try to work with you to avoid disconnections.

The Cold Weather Rule

The Cold Weather Rule was adopted by the Missouri Public Service Commission in 1977. It is designed to prevent customers from being disconnected in the winter months under certain conditions. Qualifying customers are placed on more lenient payment terms to help avoid possible disconnection.



The rule -- which is in effect from November 1 to March 31 -- applies to natural gas and electric utilities under PSC jurisdiction that provide heat-related service.

Municipally operated systems, cooperatives, and those that provide propane delivered by truck are not under PSC jurisdiction. The rule does not apply to them.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The utility may recover unpaid amounts from those winter months by adjusting the customer's Cold Weather Rule payment installments after March 31. If customers do not pay these installments on time, they can be disconnected.

What Does The Cold Weather Rule Mean To You?

1. Prohibits disconnection of heat-related service from November 1 through March 31 when the temperature is forecasted to drop below 32 degrees.
2. Allows you to budget your payments over 12 months.
3. Allows you to extend payment of pre-existing arrears beyond 12 months.
4. Does not require a deposit if payment agreement is kept.
5. Requires that you be notified by mail, with one notification attempt in person, before your service is shut off.
6. Allows you to register with the utility if you are:
 - a. sixty-five (65) years of age or older;
 - b. disabled to the extent that you have filed with the utility a form submitted by a medical physician attesting that your household must have natural gas or electric utility service provided in the home to maintain life or health; or
 - c. if you have obtained a formal award letter issued from the federal government of disability benefits.
7. Prohibits disconnection of registered low-income elderly or disabled customers who make a minimum payment.
8. Requires that you be notified of possible financial help in paying your bill.
9. Allows reconnection of your service for less than the full amount owed.

Water

Saving Water Can Save You Money

How much water you use at home depends on the size of your household, use habits, and the type of plumbing fixtures in your home.

Some of the largest uses of water are lawn sprinklers, automatic irrigation systems, toilets, and washing machines.



Some estimate that nearly 14 percent of the water a typical homeowner pays for is never used -- it leaks down the drain!

There's plenty you can do to conserve water -- and at the same time save money on your utility bills. Here are some easy steps:

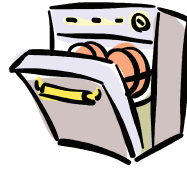
- Turn the water off while brushing your teeth or shaving.
- Take short showers.
- Keep drinking water in the refrigerator instead of letting the faucet run until the water is cool.
- Install a water saving showerhead; they use one-third the amount of water that a regular shower head uses.

Water

Water Saving Tips Around The House

In The Kitchen and Laundry

Scrape, rather than rinse dishes before loading into a dishwasher; wash only full loads.



Thaw frozen foods in refrigerator overnight; do not use water to defrost foods.

Wash only full loads of laundry or use the appropriate water level or load size selection on the washing machine.

Outdoors

Sweep driveways, steps, and sidewalks rather than hosing them off.



Control the flow of a hose with an automatic shut off nozzle.

Water the lawn or garden during the coolest part of the day and only as needed. Outdoor water use averages about 117 gallons per day.

Cover outdoor pools when not in use to avoid evaporation.

Water

Maintenance Tips

Fix leaks. A dripping faucet can waste up to 2,700 gallons of water per year.

A toilet that runs continuously can use almost 4,000 gallons per day.

Consider water saving units, such as **low-flow toilets**, when replacing appliances.



Read your water meter to help monitor your water use and detect leaks.

Check Your Water Meter

Your water meter can be a valuable tool. Follow these easy steps to check for water leaks:

- Make sure no water is running.
- Turn off all faucets and water-consuming appliances - even your automatic icemaker, evaporative cooler and furnace humidifier.
- Read your water meter.
- Write down the current reading including tenths of a cubic foot (or gallons).
- Read the meter again after 30 to 60 minutes. If the meter reading has changed, you have a leak.

Bathroom Plumbing Problems

Even a slow, silent leak can add gallons to your bill.

Most toilet leaks are at the overflow pipe or at the flapper ball. If it is at the overflow pipe, the water level is usually too high. Sometimes a leak develops below the water line, or the fill valve becomes worn. Worn fill valves also waste water. Consult a plumber if you are not an experienced do-it-yourselfer.



Flapper ball leaks are more difficult to detect than overflow pipe leaks. The best way to check a flapper ball leak is to put a few drops of food coloring in the tank and see if it seeps into the bowl. If it does, the flapper ball is probably leaking from either worn parts or a misaligned mechanism. A do-it-yourselfer should be able to fix this problem.

Irregular mineral deposits can form between the flapper ball and drain lip. Check the flapper ball to ensure that it closes and seals the drain successfully.

Other Sources of Water Leaks

FAUCETS -- Worn washers are another common cause of water leaks.



If faucets drip after they've been turned off firmly, usually the washer is worn and needs to be replaced. This task involves shutting off the water supply, dismantling the faucet and replacing the washer.

Consult a hardware store or do-it-yourself book. If the faucet still leaks after you've replaced the washer, consult a plumber. Even a slow drip can use as much as 5,000 gallons of water per month. A steady stream can lose up to 21,000 gallons per month.

VALVES -- When correcting faulty and leaking plumbing, it is important that your shut-off valves are properly located and in working order.

Old valves that no one has turned for many years may spring leaks when used. Small leaks may be corrected by tightening the packing nut. Main residential shut-off valves are usually located where the main water line first enters the home and on the residential side of the water meter.



Most sinks, wash basins, water heaters and toilets have their own shut-off valves, most showers and tubs do not.

Telecommunications

Low Income/Disabled Assistance and Link-Up Programs

Low Income/Disabled Assistance and Link-Up are state and federal support programs that help qualified people get a discount on their monthly local telephone bill. For more information, contact your local phone company.



Low Income Assistance --
Provides discounts up to \$13.50 per month depending on your local phone company.

Disabled Assistance --
Provides discounts of \$3.50 per month.

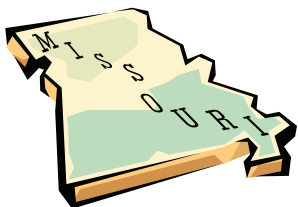
Link-Up -- Under this program, qualified low income individuals may receive a 50 percent reduction (up to \$30) on initial telephone connection charges.

You may be eligible for assistance if you or a member of your household participate in any of these programs: Food Stamps; MOHealthnet (or Medicaid); Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program; Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program; Supplemental Security Income (SSI); Federal Public Housing Assistance; National School Lunch Program's free lunch program; and certain disability benefits.

Telecommunications

Relay Missouri

Relay Missouri is a telecommunications relay service, providing full telephone accessibility to people who are deaf, hard-of-hearing or speech disabled.



Specially trained Communication Assistants help translate calls from verbal communication to text format or Braille or from text format to verbal communication. Relay Missouri is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with no restrictions on the length or number of calls placed.

7-1-1 is the statewide telephone relay number that connects standard (voice) telephone users with deaf, hard-of-hearing, and/or speech disabled people.

Telephone equipment is available to qualified users with special needs. For more information on how to obtain a device in your area, please call the Missouri Assistive Technology Program:

1-800-647-8557 (voice)

1-800-647-8558 (TTY)

www.at.mo.gov

Captioned Telephone Services

This state-of-the-art technology enhances telecommunications service for people who are hard-of-hearing, or who have experienced hearing loss.

The service requires a special phone that has a screen which displays captioned text of the other party's conversation in addition to delivering the voice call. Captioning occurs almost simultaneously with spoken words.

Captioned telephone service users and callers are not billed extra charges for captioning services, but it may be necessary to dial 1-877-243-2823 then your telephone number to receive captioned services.

Resources

Missouri Attorney General

800-392-8222

www.ago.mo.gov

Association Of Missouri Electric Cooperatives

573-635-6857

www.amec.org

Better Business Bureau

703-276-0100

www.bbb.org

MO Lawyer Referral Service

573-636-3635

Missouri Cable Television Association

573-635-1915

www.missouricabletv.com

Missouri Propane Association

1-800-601-9332

www.missouripropane.com

Missouri Association for Community Action

573-634-2969

www.communityaction.org

Resources

Missouri Public
Service Commission
800-392-4211
www.psc.mo.gov

Be Energy Efficient
www.beenergyefficient.org



Missouri Department of Natural Resources (Info. Hotline)
800-361-4827
www.dnr.mo.gov

Mo One Call / Dig Rite
800-344-7483 (1-800-DIG-RITE) or 811
www.mo1call.com

Federal Communications Commission
888-225-5322
www.fcc.gov

Federal Trade Commission
www.ftc.gov
Consumer protection -- 877-382-4357
Identity theft -- 877-438-4338

U.S. Department of Energy
1-202-586-5000
www.energy.gov

The PSC is Here To Help

Created in 1913, the Missouri Public Service Commission (PSC) regulates investor-owned telecommunications, water and sewer, natural gas, electric and steam utilities.

The PSC works to ensure that Missouri citizens receive safe, reliable and reasonably priced utility services.

If you have an inquiry, billing question or service-related problem that your utility provider cannot answer, please call the PSC.

Toll Free: 1-800-392-4211

You may file a complaint by fax 573-526-1500 or electronically at www.psc.mo.gov/info-con-complaint-form.asp

Or mail to:

Missouri Public Service Commission
Attention: Consumer Services Department
200 Madison Street
P.O. Box 360
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0360



Printed July 2011