

Connectivity

January / February 2025 | www.semcoenergygas.com



SAFETY REMINDER

Natural gas meters and pressure regulators are designed to withstand extreme outdoor weather conditions, but did you know that snow and ice build-up can damage them?

During the winter, there are a few ways to help protect gas meter equipment and gas appliances to avoid a potentially hazardous situation or disruption of your gas service, including:

- **Clean and repair** leaky seams in your gutters and downspouts to prevent melting snow and ice from dripping onto the gas meter or pressure regulator, which can result in them getting covered in ice when the weather turns colder.
- **To ensure safe operation**, never allow snow to cover your gas meter or its pressure regulator or block your appliance exhaust vents.
- **Use caution** when shoveling snow, plowing, or snowblowing to avoid piling snow against your gas meter, pressure regulator, or appliance vents.
- **Clear a path** to the meter free from snow and ice for easy access. A blocked meter can hinder access to responders in the event of an emergency.



Remove soft snow build-up gently, using only a broom or your hand, rather than a shovel that could damage the meter. Do not try to break up or remove ice or frozen snow from the gas meter, pressure regulator, or piping. If you find the gas meter or pressure regulator is covered in frozen ice or snow, do not attempt to remove the ice or use de-icer. Contact SEMCO ENERGY Gas Company at 1-800-624-2019. A SEMCO technician will take the appropriate steps to rectify the situation.

NATURAL GAS WORKS FOR MICHIGAN



The weather outside is frightful and a fire in your gas fireplace would be delightful! A gas fireplace can warm your home and add charm and elegance without the need to cut, split and store wood, or clean up ash and debris.

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR A 2024 HOME HEATING CREDIT?

Apply for a Home Heating Credit (HHC) for the 2024 tax year to help pay winter bills if you meet the listed household income guidelines and exemptions. You may claim an exemption for yourself, your spouse, and other dependents. Additional exemptions may also be available. HHC is supported by the Federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

Forms are generally available mid to late January and can be found on the SEMCO website or by contacting Customer Service. SEMCO can provide you with assistance in completing the form. HHC claims must be filed before September 30 each year.

Please contact SEMCO once you have filed for the HHC. Protection is available to allow time for the credit to be issued. Please keep a copy of your form with the number of exemptions claimed and the amount of the credit. You will be required to pay for the natural gas service used during the shutoff protection period.

Income eligibility guidelines are as follows:

EXEMPTIONS	MAXIMUM INCOME
Zero to One	\$16,566
Two	\$22,484
Three	\$28,402
Four	\$34,320
Five	\$40,238
Six	\$46,156

For each exemption over six, add \$5,918.

2-1-1

2-1-1 is a one-stop, around-the-clock, free phone and online service that links people with information or agencies that can help with utility assistance and other needs, such as rent payment help, child and elder care, emergency shelters, job training, counseling, etc.

Simply dial 2-1-1 on your phone or visit mi211.org and select Search Resource Database to get connected to available services.



SEMCO ENERGY GAS COMPANY OFFERS A VARIETY OF PAYMENT OPTIONS

SEMCO ENERGY Gas Company offers a variety of convenient payment options including:

- ▶ **DIRECT PAY:** This plan automatically deducts the amount of your monthly bill from your savings or checking account each month on the due date.
- ▶ **MY ACCESS ONLINE:** Manage your account and pay your bill online by electronic check or credit card. You may also enroll in eBill and receive an email each month when your bill is available for viewing. My Access Online also allows you to access and review other important account information.
- ▶ **PAY BY PHONE:** SEMCO accepts payments over the phone. To take advantage of 24-hour payment processing, just call 1-800-624-2019 to pay using VISA, Discover, MasterCard, American Express, or by electronic check. Please have your account number and credit card or electronic check information available.
- ▶ **PAY BY TEXT:** Customers can make payments anytime, anywhere on any cell phone. Plus, customers receive text alerts when their bill is ready. To enroll, simply log into your online account and choose Pay by Text on the home screen.
- ▶ **LOCAL PAYMENT AGENTS:** You can pay your bill in person at any of our local payment agents. Just present your bill and a check, money order, or cash when making your payment. Also, be aware that it can take up to two (2) business days for your payment to be credited to your SEMCO account. Please be sure to use only authorized CheckFreePay agents to pay your SEMCO bill. Should you receive a shut-off notice and already paid at an agency, please contact SEMCO at 1-800-624-2019 with your confirmation number.

A convenience fee may be charged for certain payment options, including using a credit card, electronic check, or a local payment agent.



Download on the
App Store

GET IT ON
Google Play

Now You Can
Pay Your Bill at

Walmart
Save money. Live better.

Pay your bill at your local Walmart with an additional fee as low as \$2.25. Just take a copy of your bill to any Walmart MoneyCenter or Customer Service Desk. For more information, call SEMCO ENERGY or go online to www.walmart.com/billpayment.

The following is a list of authorized payment locations:

ALBION

Mower Agency
300 N. Eaton St.

BATTLE CREEK

Custer Party Store
4315 W. Dickman Road

BRIDGEMAN

Midtown Party Store
9714 Red Arrow Hwy.

BUCHANAN

Lowery Meat
& Grocery
310 River St.

CASS CITY

Quaker Maid Store
6614 Main St.

CLAY

Anchor Bay Market
7205 Dyke Road

HOMER

Hopps Colonial
Pharmacy
126 W. Main St.

HOUGHTON

Check and Cash
902 Razorback Dr.,
STE 8B

ISHPEMING

Check and Cash
810 Carp River Lane,
STE 1

LAKEVIEW

Community First
Fed CU
9637 North Greenville

MARINE CITY

Tim's Party Store
1038 S. Parker St.

MARQUETTE

Check and Cash
1467 W. Washington St.

MARYSVILLE

Walsh's Party Store
1171 Gratiot Blvd.

MICHIGAN CITY, IN

Checks 4 Cash
4213 Franklin St.

NILES

Crocker Party Store
1702 Broadway St.

PORT HURON

Ryan's Market
1837 Pine Grove Ave.

SAULT SAINTE MARIE

Checks and Cash
2120 Ashmun St.

SCHOOLCRAFT

Harding's Fresh Xpress
139 N. Grand

VANDALIA

7 Days Express Mart
17925 State Road

WASHINGTON

Tobacco Village
66144 Van Dyke Road

WATERSMEET

Nordine Plaza
US 2 & Hwy. 45



CUSTOMER SERVICE 1-800-624-2019 or
customer.service@semcoenergy.com

GAS LEAKS AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

1-888-GAS-1-GAS (1-888-427-1427)

www.semcoenergygas.com

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SEMCOENERGY
GAS COMPANY

PUBLIC AWARENESS EDITION

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AFFORDABLE HEATING SOLUTIONS FOR MICHIGAN HOMES

A 2024 report from the University of Michigan's School for Environment and Sustainability identifies natural gas heating as the **most affordable** and **cost-effective** option for Michigan homes.

The report, titled *Heating with Justice: Barriers and Solutions for Affordable Heating in Cold Climates*, highlights the economic advantages of natural gas over other heating methods, including high-efficiency heat pumps. It emphasizes that natural gas is not only widely accessible but also remains the most financially viable choice for Michiganders, making it an essential component of affordable heating solutions in the State.



Natural gas is particularly affordable and efficient when paired with high-efficiency appliances and proper home insulation. To enhance your home's natural gas efficiency, consider utilizing SEMCO rebates.

GAS PIPELINES ARE RELIABLE

SEMCO ENERGY Gas Company utilizes an extensive network of underground pipelines to deliver natural gas to its customers.



The purpose of these pipelines is to transport the natural gas from pipeline supply points to residential, commercial, and industrial customers. SEMCO is committed to ensuring these pipelines are operated safely and reliably.

According to National Transportation Safety Board statistics, pipelines are the **safest method for transporting natural gas**. Pipelines have a safety record unparalleled by any other mode of transporting energy products.

As part of SEMCO's continuing effort to maintain the reliability and integrity of its pipelines, prevent incidents from occurring, and respond to emergencies, SEMCO has developed and maintains good communication networks with state and local emergency officials in Michigan.

SEMCO meets with emergency officials in your area to discuss emergency preparedness and response plans to prepare for various scenarios. SEMCO provides natural gas emergency training and specialized equipment to a majority of emergency response organizations and, when necessary, participates in joint response planning with local, state, and federal emergency responders.

NATURAL GAS SAFETY FACTS

As part of our ongoing education efforts, SEMCO ENERGY Gas Company offers these facts about natural gas safety:

- **Natural gas is colorless, odorless, and tasteless.** To help you recognize the presence of natural gas, an odor similar to rotten eggs is added.
- **Natural gas is lighter than air, rises quickly, and disperses harmlessly in open areas.** However, in an enclosed area, natural gas displaces air at ceiling level and fills the room from the ceiling down. As gas fills an enclosed space, it displaces air and suffocation may occur.
- **Natural gas is not Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG).** Liquefied petroleum gases, such as propane, are heavier than air and, unlike natural gas, will collect in low places.
- **Natural gas is not toxic or poisonous.**
- **Natural gas cannot burn without oxygen.** For natural gas to burn, it must be mixed with air and must have an ignition source, such as a pilot light or electric arc from a light switch, electric motor, doorbell, or telephone.
- **Burning natural gas will not explode.** In many cases, it is better to let the natural gas burn than to extinguish the fire. If the fire is extinguished prior to stopping the flow of gas, the gas has the potential to build up to an explosive level.



GAS LEAK HAZARDS

A natural gas leak may present these hazards:

- Fire
- Explosion
- Asphyxiation (Natural gas displaces oxygen in confined spaces.)

These hazards can be caused by:

- Rupturing, nicking, or puncturing a pipeline
- Uncontrolled escaping gas or fuel
- Extreme natural events such as floods, tornadoes, and earthquakes
- Heavy ice on outside meters or other gas pipelines
- Fire or explosion near or directly involving a pipeline facility
- Collapsed buildings that break or damage pipelines
- Civil disturbances such as riots
- Water main breaks that weaken roadways and pavement damaging pipelines
- Under-pressure or over-pressure in the pipeline system
- Equipment failure
- Human error

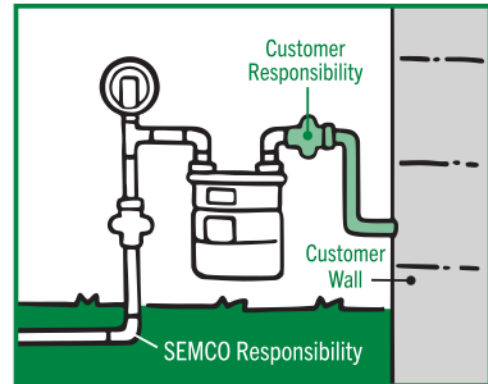
LINE SAFETY AND MAINTENANCE

SEMCO ENERGY Gas Company maintains all gas and service lines that connect our gas distribution system to your home.

You are responsible for “customer-owned lines” or the lines after the meter into your home and to your appliances. This includes underground lines on your property to yard lights, pool and spa heaters, garages, workshops, and similar areas. Please make it a routine to have all gas lines checked for leaks or corrosion.

Here are some signs to look for when you suspect a leak:

- Blowing or hissing sounds
- Brown patches of vegetation on or near a right-of-way
- Bubbling water at a pond, creek, or river
- Gas odor
- Dry spot in moist earth



If you suspect a leak or a safety hazard, leave the area and then call SEMCO immediately at 1-888-GAS-1-GAS (1-888-427-1427). A trained technician will check for leaks and shut off your gas supply, if a safety hazard exists.

SEMCO technicians do not perform repair service on customer-owned lines. After you have a qualified heating or plumbing contractor make the necessary repairs to your customer-owned lines, a SEMCO technician will restore your gas service if required.

DAMAGE PREVENTION

Unlike water, natural gas doesn't freeze so the natural gas pipes are not buried as deep as water pipes. The depth of the natural gas pipes may be less than 12 inches due to grade changes, erosion, and frost. Do not assume the depth of a gas facility.

That's why it is critical to call the free service, **MISS DIG (811)**, before any digging is performed. Although gas lines can vary in material and size, the most common pipe in a customer's yard is a yellow or tan ½ to 1-inch diameter plastic pipe. This looks very different from the gas pipe used inside your home.



OTHER PIPELINES IN YOUR AREA

For a listing of pipelines in your area, please visit the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS) website at <https://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov>. This website enables the user to view the National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS) data one county at a time. NPMS data is for reference purposes only. It should never be used as a substitute for contacting a one-call center prior to excavation activities.

Please call 811 before any digging occurs.

HOW TO GET ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

CUSTOMER SERVICE

1-800-624-2019 or
customer.service@semcoenergy.com

PIPELINE SAFETY

[www.semcoenergygas.com/
pipeline-safety-information/](http://www.semcoenergygas.com/pipeline-safety-information/)

GAS LEAKS AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

1-888-GAS-1-GAS (1-888-427-1427)

www.semcoenergygas.com

