



CONNECTING WITH US

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Ideas, Advice and News from Wisconsin Public Service



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OCTOBER IS ENERGY AWARENESS MONTH

LET'S GET READY FOR WINTER TOGETHER

Days are getting shorter and temperatures cooler — two sure signs that winter's on its way. But that doesn't have to mean out-of-control energy costs. By working together, we'll keep costs in line the right way.

Wisconsin Public Service continues to develop efficient new ways to produce and deliver the energy you count on, working toward our goal of keeping your costs as low as possible. At the same time, people like you are putting the energy-saving tips, products and programs found at [wisconsinpublicservice.com](http://www.wisconsinpublicservice.com) to work, putting the power to save energy and money in their own hands. Between your commitment and ours, it's paying off in savings.

5 WINTER WARM-UPS

Use these ideas to get ready for energy- and money-savings, all winter long.

- **Lower your thermostat.** Every 1° you lower you thermostat can reduce your heating bill up to 3%.
- **Tune up your heating system.** Losses from a poorly maintained system accumulate over time - sometimes at a rate of 1 to 2% each year.
- **Insulate.** Stop cold air from coming in by insulating walls, attic and outlet covers.

- **Buy ENERGY STAR®.** When purchasing everything from appliances to light bulbs, look for the ENERGY STAR® label and save energy, money, and the environment.
- **Turn off lights.** Shutting off unused lights is still one of the simplest, most effective ideas in energy savings. Try motion sensors that turn lights off automatically when everyone leaves a room.

Find more ways to use less energy and save, including **Energy-Saving Tools & Ideas**, at [wisconsinpublicservice.com](http://www.wisconsinpublicservice.com).

recipe corner

Mushroom Meatloaf

Servings: 6-8
Prep time: 10 minutes
Baking temperature: 350°
Baking time: 1 hour

- ½ can (10- ¾ oz. size) cream of mushroom soup
- 1 ½ lbs. ground beef
- ½ cup dry bread crumbs
- ¼ cup chopped onions
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 1 beaten egg
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Dash of pepper
- ½ cup milk
- 1 can (4 oz.) mushrooms

Combine ¼ can soup, ground beef, bread crumbs, onions, parsley, egg, salt and pepper. Pack lightly into a greased pan. Combine the other ¼ can of soup with milk and heat. Pour the soup mixture over the loaf and top with mushrooms. Then bake.



By using a glass or ceramic pan in the oven, instead of metal, you can lower the temperature approximately 25° F and cook in the same time.



We've Got Answers For Winter Heating Concerns

Michigan Home Heating Assistance Programs Can Help

Contact: *Wisconsin Public Service at 800-450-7260*

Keeping energy use down and costs more manageable is a goal we can all reach. But for senior citizens and those with limited incomes, meeting that goal can be more difficult — especially when winter heating bills begin to add up. At Wisconsin Public Service, your peace-of-mind is important to us and we want you to know more about your options under the Michigan Winter Protection Plan.

From November 1 through March 31 each year, the Michigan Winter Protection Plan keeps senior citizens and those with limited incomes safe from service shut offs and unmanageable utility bills.

When you participate in the Plan, your utilities cannot be discontinued during winter months if you pay at least 7% of your estimated annual bill each month, along with equal monthly payments of any past due bills.

Senior citizens participating in the Plan aren't required to make specific payments over the winter months, though are encouraged to pay whatever they can to avoid large bills when Plan protection ends.

Who's Eligible

You may qualify for protection if you:

- Are age 65 or older
- Receive Department of Human Services cash assistance
- Receive food stamps
- Receive Medicaid
- Have a household income at or below 150% of poverty level
(see Annual Income Guidelines)

Winter Protection Plan

Annual Income Guidelines (2009-2010)

Number of Household Members	150% of Poverty Level
1	\$16,245
2	21,855
3	27,465
4	33,075
5	38,685
6	44,295
7	49,905
8	55,515

Add \$3,740 for each additional household member.

Crisis Assistance Program

Contact: *Michigan's Department of Human Services (DHS)*

State Emergency Relief Program (SER)

You do not have to be a client of the DHS to apply for help through the SER. This program is available year-round to low-income households that have received a heat or electric shutoff notice or have a need for deliverable fuel. However, if you receive a DHS cash grant, you may vendor part of that grant towards heat and electric bills. Contact your DHS caseworker for information on the advantages of vrending a cash grant.

Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Program

Contact: *Local Community Action Agency*

The Weatherization Assistance Program provides free home energy conservation services to eligible low-income homeowners and renters. Weatherization may include caulking, weatherstripping, insulating and smoke detectors.

Medical Emergency Protection

Contact: *Wisconsin Public Service at 800-450-7260*

You are protected from service shutoff for nonpayment of your natural gas and/or electric bill for up to 21 days if you have a proven medical emergency. You must provide written proof from a doctor that a medical emergency exists.

Shutoff Protection for Customers on Active Duty in the Military

Contact: *Wisconsin Public Service at 800-450-7260*

If you or your spouse is the WPS customer of record and either of you is called to full-time active military service by the President of the United States or the Governor of Michigan during a time of declared national or state emergency or war, you may apply for shut-off protection from your electric or natural gas service for up to 90 days. At the end of the active duty period, you must notify your utility company of your status and make payment arrangements.

Contact Us

Wisconsin Public Service wants to help you lower your energy bills — and we can do that by showing you how to use less energy without giving up any of your comfort or conveniences. Before winter sets in, we encourage you to enroll in **Budget Billing**, which spreads your payments out evenly over 12 months. And for more information on energy conservation, visit wisconsinpublicservice.com or call **800-450-7260**. If you think you may experience payment difficulties this winter, call us early at **800-450-7260**, so we can help.

Furnaces Need Check-Ups, Too.

Ensure the health of your heating system by having your furnace inspected yearly by a licensed, qualified technician. And follow these safety steps throughout the heating season:

- Clean or replace your furnace filter regularly.
- Periodically check the flame in the burner to make sure it is blue. A yellow flame may indicate the need for an adjustment.
- Check chimney flues for corrosion and make sure vents are clear of blockages or debris.
- Keep the area around your furnace clean. And do not store flammable liquids or other combustibles near it.

In addition, know the signs of CO poisoning and make sure your home has at least one CO detector per floor. It only takes a moment and could save a life.

Take a second for safety.

