

High energy supply prices expected throughout the winter

As the temperatures cool, and residents of the Hudson Valley begin to prepare for winter, Central Hudson is advising homeowners and renters in the area to prepare for elevated energy supply costs that will have an impact on utility bills.

Based on current market conditions, Central Hudson is forecasting approximately a 13 percent increase in total electric bills and approximately a 33 percent increase in total gas bills for residential customers compared to last winter.

"We understand rising supply prices can create confusion and stress surrounding utility bills for our customers and we are working closely with our regulators to find ways to keep them as low as possible," said Anthony Campagiorni, Senior Vice President of Customer Services and Gas Operations. "We also urge our customers to take advantage of the resources available on our website. We offer assistance programs and billing options that can help customers manage their accounts."

Leaders and energy experts, including Gov. Kathy Hochul, the New York Independent System Operator and the New York State Department of Public Service, are warning residents to prepare for elevated energy supply costs throughout the winter months and are also advising resi-

dents to take steps to prepare.

Central Hudson does not own power generation and has not since New York deregulated the utilities in 2000. Since that time, Central Hudson and New York's other major utilities have purchased energy from third-party suppliers. These costs are not marked up and Central Hudson does not profit from them, meaning customers pay the same rates as Central Hudson for the energy they use.

Several international, national and regional factors are contributing to this market volatility:

- Unrest in eastern Europe continues to have a significant impact on energy markets world-wide.
- Locally, the closure of Indian Point last year increased the region's reliance on natural gas for power generation.
- Central Hudson's storage inventory remains slightly ahead of plan, however, physical storage inventory levels in the U.S. and Northeast remain lower than last year and below the five-year average ahead of an anticipated cold winter;
- Supply and transportation pipeline constraints in the northeast continue to drive up prices during times of high demand.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND BILLING PROGRAMS

Customers can help manage energy costs in various ways, such as implementing energy efficiency measures and managing bill impacts by exploring their billing options.

Low-cost and no-cost efficiency measures homeowners can take to help manage energy costs include:

- Turning down thermostats (each degree saves up to three percent on energy use);

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HEAP season is open

Beginning Nov. 1, 2022, qualified customers can apply for Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) grants, a federally funded program that provides regular and emergency assistance to help pay heating and utility bills.

For more information on eligibility requirements and benefits, visit www.CentralHudson.com/HEAP or <http://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap/program>.

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Help lower the cost of your home's energy bill

WHAT IS EMPOWER NEW YORK?

EmPower New York provides no-cost energy efficiency solutions to income-eligible Central Hudson customers. Whether you own your home or rent, you may choose a participating provider or one will be assigned to you to provide tips on saving energy and to assess whether your home may benefit from free energy upgrades such as:

- Home energy assessment to identify areas of possible energy improvements;
- Installation of high-efficiency lighting;
- Installation of attic and wall insulation;
- Replacement of old, inefficient refrigerators and freezers; and
- Installation of water-saving showerheads.

Customers who sign up for EmPower New York also qualify for a monthly electric bill credit of between \$5-\$15 from community solar.

WHAT TO EXPECT?

Find information on what to expect by visiting www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/EmPower-New-York-Program/What-to-Expect.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Central Hudson customers who live in a home with 4 units or less, and who have a household income below 60 percent of state median (i.e. HEAP eligible) may be eligible for the program.

Find out if you are income-eligible by visiting www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/EmPower-New-York-Program/Eligibility-Guidelines.

WHO DOES THE WORK?

The contractor providing your energy assessment and making the upgrades is accredited by the Building Performance Institute (BPI), a national organization that sets the technical standards for contractors in energy efficient building performance.

Find the participating certified contractor list by visiting www.CentralHudson.com/globalassets/pdf/account-resources/empower-contractor-list.pdf.

NEED HELP?

Call 877-697-6278; or email: info.residential@nyserda.ny.gov.

SPACE HEATER AWARENESS AND SAFETY

If you use a space heater, please be aware of the energy these devices consume—which can lead to higher than normal energy bills.

Space heaters use a lot of energy—750 to 1,500 watts on average. By comparison, the average home refrigerator uses between 150 and 500 watts, depending on the size and model.

In addition to the amount of energy consumed, space heaters can be a potential fire hazard. Portable space heaters cause nearly 1,700 house fires a year, on average.* Fires started by space heaters result in about 80 deaths annually.

Follow these tips to stay safe while using a space heater:

- **Keep the space heater at least 3 feet away** from anything that can burn.
- Choose a space heater with a **thermostat and overheat protection**.
- **Keep children away** from the space heater.
- **Be sure space heaters are off and unplugged** when you leave the room or go to bed.

*According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission



Utilities implement plan to help low income customers

You may be able to receive a bill credit

Recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic caused economic hardship for low-income families and individuals, Central Hudson is implementing the Electric and Gas Bill Relief Program, approved by the New York State Public Service Commission for income-eligible New Yorkers.

Residential customers who receive benefits from a government assistance program (such as SNAP or HEAP) will have any past-due bill balance for service through May 1, 2022, reduced through a bill credit.

To qualify, you must:

1. Be enrolled in Central Hudson's Bill Discount Program by Dec. 31, 2022; or
2. Have received benefits under New York State's Emergency Rental As-

sistance Program (ERAP) or Regular Arrears Supplement (RAS) in the prior heating season.

Bill Discount Program:

- You may be enrolled automatically if you receive benefits from a government assistance program. See the full list of qualifying programs below. To see if you're enrolled, you can check your Central Hudson bill.
- If you're not enrolled but you participate in a government assistance program, visit www.CentralHudson.com/Assistance to apply.

Important information:

- If you are enrolled in the Bill Discount Program or received ERAP

- or RAS benefits, your bill credit will be processed automatically and you do not need to take any action. In addition, your service will not be suspended for non-payment while your bill credit or ERAP payment is being processed.
- If your ERAP application is pending with the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, your account will not be credited until you have been found eligible for the program, the application has been fully processed and the funds have been received by Central Hudson.
- All customers are responsible for all charges for service after May 1, 2022.

Qualifying governmental assistance programs:

- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
- Lifeline Telephone Service Program (Lifeline)
- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- Safety Net Assistance
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Veterans Disability or Survivors Pension

ENERGY IN TRANSITION



New York is on an ambitious path to reduce emissions in the way we use energy, from cars and transportation, building heating, industrial processes, agriculture, electricity production and more. This clean energy transition will have an impact on every resident of New York State.

The Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA), which was enacted by New York in 2019, aims to slash emissions to protect the environment and establish New York as a national leader in combating climate

change. This legislation poses potential concerns because its prescriptive measures and tight timeline limit options for power generation, would significantly raise costs, potentially jeopardize grid integrity and eliminate the use of natural gas.

Central Hudson agrees that significant action must be taken to drastically reduce our carbon emissions, but that it must be done with a measured and financially responsible approach.

This must be accomplished affordably while also maintaining the integri-

ty of the grid, preserving our economic base and meeting our current and future energy needs.

New York's climate laws, while laudable, may have unintended consequences that raise costs and compromise energy availability.

Central Hudson, as well as many other stakeholders, offer recommendations on how we can move forward in reducing emissions while ensuring a robust, affordable and viable energy system. Below are four principles to make the transition.

CENTRAL HUDSON'S 4 PRINCIPLES FOR A SUCCESSFUL ENERGY TRANSITION



PRINCIPLE 1:

The electric power grid must meet your energy needs at all times.

Why: Intermittent renewable resources alone cannot provide the necessary around-the-clock energy needed and used by all New Yorkers. Known conventional resources and new technologies will be required.



PRINCIPLE 2:

New Yorkers' livelihoods must be enhanced, not harmed by this transition.

Why: High energy costs harms residents and businesses and destabilizes the economy. New York should set cost limits on the clean energy transition and recognize that not everything can be electrified. Also, this is a national and global issue; New York produces only 3.3% of total emissions in the United States, and .5% of global emissions.



PRINCIPLE 3:

We must reduce emissions at the lowest-possible cost.

Why: Energy efficiency is the most cost-effective way to reduce emissions and save money. New York should continue to support and evaluate further expansion of energy efficiency programs as the least cost and most efficient path to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and lower energy consumption of buildings by improving efficiency codes and standards.



PRINCIPLE 4:

All emission reduction solutions should be on the table; and right now, they're not.

Why: The CLCPA is prescriptive, citing the use of specific technologies (wind, solar, batteries). New York should support research and development into low and emissions-free resources like nuclear, hydro, hydrogen, carbon capture, renewable natural gas and emerging technologies to make possible the achievement of the state's climate goals. The state should not implement bans on a technology as this can stifle innovation.

HIGH ENERGY SUPPLY PRICES EXPECTED THROUGHOUT THE WINTER *(Continued from page 1)*

- Insulating ducts and hot water pipes where they run through uninsulated areas, such as crawl spaces, and repairing leaks in the duct system;
- Adding insulation, particularly in the attic;
- Keeping radiators and heating ducts clear of furniture to allow heat to circulate freely; and/or
- Sealing air leaks with weather stripping and caulk, which can save up to 10 percent on the use of heating fuels;

Beware of using electric space heaters in lieu of a traditional home heating system. Space heaters can present safety hazards, and often require significant

amounts of electricity to operate, drastically increasing usage and resulting in higher bills.

To avoid seasonal variations in energy bills, Central Hudson customers may enroll in the Budget Billing program. Budget Billing divides a household's average annual energy expenses into 11 even monthly payments, with the 12th month's payment adjusted up or down to reflect actual usage and market prices. This program makes energy bills more predictable and can help in managing household budgets.

Customers may also wish to investigate fixed rate options for electric and natural gas supply offered by Energy Service Companies. Fixed rate options do

not necessarily provide the lowest average annual cost but do serve as protection against market volatility and price spikes.

Payment assistance options are also available to qualifying customers. The federally-funded Home Energy Assistant Program (HEAP) grants for the 2022-2023 season opened for income-qualified residents on Nov. 1. HEAP grant recipients also qualify for Central Hudson's monthly Bill Discount Program.

Central Hudson's Clean Energy Marketplace provides a resource for customers to learn about renewable energy options. Customers can save up to 10 percent on their utility bill while also investing in local clean energy projects.

Self-certify in the Bill Discount Program

Customers looking to enroll in the Low Income Bill Discount Program (LIB-DP) can now self-certify through Central Hudson's new online application form. This program offers income-eligible customers a monthly bill credit for 12 consecutive months, provided the account remains open and active for the entire 12-month period.

The amount of the bill discount credit is based on the type of account and the amount of the qualifying benefit. Qualifying benefits include Regular or Emergency Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP); Lifeline; SNAP; Medicaid; SSI; Federal Public Housing Assistance; Veteran Pension or Survivors Pension; and certain programs for Native Americans. To enroll, the customer or a member of the customer's household must provide documentation or proof of enrollment in one of these programs.

If the Central Hudson account receives a HEAP benefit, they will automatically be enrolled. If other means of heating are used, such as oil, coal, propane, wood/wood pellets, kerosene or corn, and Central Hudson is notified by HEAP, the customer will be automatically enrolled. All accounts enrolled will receive a letter of confirmation. If the customer heats by other means, has received HEAP, and has not received an enrollment letter, they will need to provide Central Hudson with a copy of his or her HEAP "Notice of Decision" letter. This letter can be emailed to CareUnit@cenhud.com.

For more information, or to apply for the Bill Discount Program, visit www.CentralHudson.com/Assistance.

Residents and businesses may subscribe by visiting <http://CleanEnergyMarket.cenhud.com> to purchase a portion of the electricity produced by the project of their choice.

Other programs include Deferred Payment Agreements that help customers catch up by paying a past-due account balance in monthly installments, the Extra Security Plan which offers an extended billing due-date for qualified customers on a fixed income and the Good Neighbor Fund which provides last resort grants for families who have exhausted all other means of assistance. Learn more about Central Hudson's assistance programs by visiting www.CentralHudson.com/Assistance.

Keep safety in mind when using generators

When using electric generators during power interruptions, be sure that the unit is sized and installed properly, and operated safely and according to the manufacturer's instructions. Follow these common sense safety tips:

- Generators should be sized to meet the needs of the appliances they are connected to. If too small, appliances can be damaged, and the generator can overheat, creating a fire hazard.
- Plug appliances directly into the generator using a heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cord that is designed to handle the wattage of all the appliances being connected.
- If a generator is connected to the home, have an experienced electrician install the unit using the proper switches and connections. Improperly installed generators may overload circuits, cause a fire or shock hazard, and can result in serious injury or property damage.
- Generators connected to the home must also be installed so that electricity will not back-feed onto electric lines, which can endanger repair crews working to restore service. A disconnect switch should be professionally installed by an electrician.
- Do not operate generators in an enclosed area such as a garage, shed or enclosed porch, as this may cause a build-up of deadly carbon monoxide gas. Generators should be operated in open areas, but also protected from water by being placed, for example, on a dry surface under a shelter to prevent electric shock. Also, be sure to shut off generators when refueling, and store generators in dry areas to prevent moisture damage.



PREPARE FOR COLD WEATHER

SERVICE HEATING SYSTEMS FOR EFFICIENCY & SAFETY

Central Hudson reminds its customers to take steps to prepare for winter by servicing their heating systems, installing carbon monoxide detectors and becoming more energy efficient. Now that the weather has become cooler, heating systems will be turning on more often. In addition to checking fittings, burners and performing other adjustments, chimneys and exhaust flues should also be cleared of any obstructions, especially after leaves have fallen. Blocked flues and chimneys can prevent exhaust gases from heating systems from venting properly, causing a build-up of deadly carbon monoxide gas in the home.

Follow this checklist to get your home ready for winter:

- ✓ Change your heating system filter
- ✓ Keep indoor vents clean and clear
- ✓ Find and seal air leaks
- ✓ Get your chimney inspected
- ✓ Consider installing a smart thermostat
- ✓ Make sure the area around any outside unit(s) is clear
- ✓ Replace batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors
- ✓ Schedule preseason tune-ups, including air ducts

Homes and businesses should be equipped with carbon monoxide detectors as a safety precaution to warn of its presence, and those currently using detectors should replace the batteries regularly. If carbon monoxide is detected, the building should be evacuated, and the cause investigated by a qualified service technician. Occupants should seek medical attention if necessary.

Customers who think they smell natural gas should stop what they are doing, go outside immediately and let us know after moving to another location by calling (800) 942-8274, or emergency responders at 911.

The Heating Equipment Repair or Replacement program:

The Heating Equipment Repair or Replacement (HERR) program is available to assist customers who have primary heating equipment that is either inoperable or unsafe. The 2022-2023 Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement benefit opened Oct. 3, 2022.

If you are a homeowner and eligible, the Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement benefit can help you repair or replace your furnace, boiler and other direct heating equipment necessary to keep your home's primary heating source working.

Eligibility and benefits are based on income, household size, the primary heating source, and the presence of a household member who is under age 6, age 60 or older or permanently disabled.

For more information, visit <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap>.

Protect your family from carbon monoxide poisoning

Often called the invisible killer, carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas created when fuels such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil and kerosene burn incompletely. Heating and cooking equipment that burn fuel can also be sources of carbon monoxide.

People affected by carbon monoxide poisoning often experience headaches, dizziness, nausea, drowsiness, tightness in chest, weakness or flu-like symptoms. As exposure to carbon monoxide increases, the symptoms become more severe and can lead to unconsciousness or

even death.

Protect your family from carbon monoxide poisoning by installing carbon monoxide alarms in your home. Test your alarms monthly. If your alarm has replaceable batteries they should be changed at least every six months. Although you replace your batteries, carbon monoxide alarms don't last forever. They have a lifetime of anywhere between seven to 10 years, but it is important to check the manufacturer guidelines of each alarm.

If you suspect carbon monoxide may be present in your home, shut off the ap-

pliance if you can. Ventilate the home by opening windows and doors, and have everyone in the house step outside. Call 911 and seek medical attention right away; and contact your heating contractor to repair the problem.

For more information, visit www.CentralHudson.com/Safety.



Some ways you can help prevent carbon monoxide from forming in your home or building:

- Keep chimneys and flues free of debris, and have them cleaned and inspected periodically for cracks, leaks and for any buildup of soot or creosote.
- Make sure there is adequate air available for appliances to use. Fuel-burning equipment needs air and air space around it to function properly.
- Have heating systems cleaned and serviced regularly, including an inspection of the heat exchanger for any cracks or leaks, and adjusting the fuel to air mix for efficient combustion.
- Limit the use of indoor exhaust fans. Prolonged use of kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans, the constant use of power vents in attics, and even an open, working fireplace, can reduce the amount of air in the home. Lack of air can cause improper combustion of fuel-burning equipment, and can result in a backup of flue gases, including carbon monoxide.