

Central Hudson completes implementation of monthly meter reading

Central Hudson successfully transitioned customers in all five of its operating districts to monthly meter reading in September, more than one month ahead of schedule. Central Hudson had previously agreed with state regulators to complete the implementation by the end of October.

"With actual meter reads every month, customers are now able to compare their electricity use using more meaningful data, giving them the transparency and confidence they deserve to have in their utility bill," Central Hudson President and CEO Steph Raymond said. "We are committed to listening to our customers as we continue to make change that benefits everyone."

Monthly meter readings provide confidence that customers' bills align closely with actual usage on a monthly basis and give customers a better understanding of energy usage and consumption

patterns. Estimated readings may occasionally be used in certain circumstances, such as instances where Central Hudson cannot access the meter to obtain a reading.

Monthly meter reading is part of a larger overall commitment to continually improving services to better meet customer needs. The company has:

- Added more than three dozen new members to the customer Contact Center to reduce wait times;
- Implemented enhanced training protocols for company representatives to ensure more meaningful and effective interactions with customers;
- Hosted or attended more than 100 different customer service events throughout the service area - including several events in conjunction with federal, state and local elected officials - to assist



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thousands of customers; and

- Redesigned the online "My Account" page to provide customers greater insight into their account and usage history.

"Central Hudson plays a fundamental role in the

community, and we take our responsibility to provide safe and reliable service seriously," Raymond added. "We will continue to seek out new and innovative ways to improve our overall performance while keeping costs as low as possible for our customers."

HEAP benefits begin in November

Are you, or someone you know, having trouble managing energy bills? The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is available to help qualifying customers stay safe and warm this winter.

HEAP is a federal grant program that helps income-eligible households pay for energy bills, repairs and weatherization.

Regular HEAP benefits are scheduled to begin on Nov. 1 and may provide eligible households with benefits of up to more than \$900. Two emergency benefits are scheduled to open on Jan. 2, 2025. Eligible households may receive one regular HEAP benefit per season and could be eligible for emergency HEAP benefits if they are in danger of running out of fuel or having their utility service shut off.

Eligibility and benefit amounts are determined by household size, income, primary heating source and the presence

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HEAP

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of a household member who is under the age of 6, age sixty or older, or permanently disabled.

You may be eligible for a regular benefit if:

- A member of your household is a United States Citizen or Qualified Non-Citizen;
- Your household's gross monthly income meets income requirements;
- You receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits;
- You receive Temporary Assistance (TA); or
- You receive Code A Supplemental Security Income (SSI Living Alone)

To apply for an Emergency HEAP grant, you must have a final termination notice and grant applications that are at least 30 days apart.

HEAP may be able to help you if you heat your home with electricity, natural gas, oil, coal, propane, wood/wood pellets, kerosene or corn.

An additional benefit, Heating Equipment Repair or Replacement (HERR), is available to assist homeowners in repairing or replacing primary heating equipment when the equipment is inoperable or unsafe and is in need of repair or replacement.

HEAP benefits are funded by the federal government and administered through the New York State Department of Social Services. To apply or learn more, call (800) 342-3009 or visit <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap>.

Individuals who are 60 years of age or older and do not receive SNAP benefits may contact their local Office for the Aging for eligibility requirements and to apply for benefits. Call (800) 342-9871 or visit www.aging.ny.gov.

ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS:

Bill discounts available for eligible customers

If you or a household member receives the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), SNAP, MEDICAID, SSI, Federal Housing, Veterans Pension or Survivors Pension, you could be receiving a monthly discount on your Central Hudson bill, regardless of the heating source.

Once a qualifying benefit is received, a monthly credit will be applied to that Central Hudson account 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 service type and amount of HEAP benefit. If your account receives a HEAP credit, you will automatically be enrolled in our Bill Discount Program. Customers who self-enroll in

Central Hudson's Bill Discount Program are eligible for Tier 1 benefits.

QUALIFYING BENEFITS

Regular or Emergency HEAP; Lifeline; SNAP; Medicaid; Supplemental Security Income (SSI); Federal Public Housing Assistance; Veteran Pension or Survivors Pension; and certain programs for Native Americans. **PLEASE NOTE: Social Security income is not a valid benefit.**

REQUIREMENTS TO SELF-ENROLL

The customer or a member of the customer's household must provide documentation of proof of enrollment in (1) regular or emergency HEAP; (2) Lifeline; (3) SNAP; (4) Medicaid; (5)

Supplemental Security Income (SSI); (6) Federal Public Housing Assistance; (7) Veterans Pension or Survivors Pension; or (8) certain programs for Native Americans.

Documentation must be in the customer's name or the name of a member of the customer's household and include the customer's address. Documentation must include an issue date within the last 12 months or a future expiration date that aligns with the benefit period. Alternate fuel customers with HEAP can also provide a HEAP approval letter, mybenefits.com page or a statement from a fuel supplier showing a HEAP payment.

To apply, visit www.CentralHudson.com/BillDiscountProgram.

Central Hudson provides additional assistance programs

Central Hudson offers a range of programs to help reduce undue stress and avoid falling behind on payments.

Deferred payment agreements are available so customers who have fallen behind on their utility bills can get caught up.

Budget Billing makes your energy bills more predictable. As a Budget Billing customer, you will be billed a fixed amount for 11 months of the year, based on your account history. The 12th bill is adjusted,

up or down, to factor in the difference between your payments and your actual costs during the entire year.

The Extra Security Plan is a due date change for some customers who receive Social Security income, disability benefits and/or survivor benefits as their only source of household income.

The Good Neighbor Fund may provide eligible customers with a grant up to twice their monthly bill and not to exceed

\$325 based on energy service type and average monthly bill; and a new deferred payment agreement for the remaining balance. Veterans and military families experiencing a financial hardship may be eligible for an additional grant of \$200. Eligible veterans and military families may receive the Veteran grant two times per year.

For more information on the assistance programs available to you, visit www.CentralHudson.com/PaymentAssistance.

Special protections offered for the elderly, blind and disabled

If a member of your household is blind, disabled or age 62 years or older, please notify Central Hudson so that we may add a note to your account. This note will ensure that a diligent effort is made to work with the customer to devise a plan that would preclude disconnection.

This note will also ensure the customer receives a courtesy phone call

when bad weather that may cause power outages is expected. We will also provide automated calls to these customers if they lose power during a storm. These calls include information on estimated restoration times, shelter locations and bottled water and dry ice locations.

At least twice a year, an attempt is made to verify that the phone number on

these customers' accounts are valid. Central Hudson will not terminate service in the winter, between Dec. 1 and April 15.

To apply for special protections or for more information on Central Hudson's assistance programs, visit www.CentralHudson.com/Assistance and click Services for Seniors.

SPACE HEATERS:

Use these devices safely and be aware of energy consumption

When the weather gets cold, portable space heaters can be a convenient source of supplemental heat. 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 — according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Fires started by space heaters result in about 70 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.



WINTER STORMS

AND YOUR ELECTRIC SERVICE

Destructive storms can cause severe damage to our electric distribution system. If a storm knocks out your power, trust that Central Hudson employees will work around the clock to restore service as soon — and as safely — as possible.

If you lose power, follow our checklist to facilitate the restoration process, ensure your safety and remain informed.

✓ NOTIFY US

We rely on reports of service interruptions from customers like you to determine the extent of an outage and to help us prioritize our restoration efforts. To report an outage:

- Go online: www.CentralHudson.com/Storms
- Text "OUT" to 236483. For text messaging information, go to www.CentralHudson.com/Alerts.
- Call the PowerLine at (845) 452-2700.

✓ PULL SOME PLUGS

To reduce the risk of damage to major appliances when power is restored, turn them off or unplug them.

✓ LEAVE ON A LIGHT

Leave on a light inside and outside your home so you know when power is restored. It also helps our crews see when power is restored at your location.

✓ WATCH OUT FOR WIRES

If you see a downed wire, call 911 to report the problem immediately. Stay at least 30 feet away and warn others to keep away.

✓ FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

We keep customers informed about outage restoration efforts and updates on our Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) pages when storms cause widespread outages. **Please DO NOT report outages on Facebook or X.**

✓ "CHECK" THE RADIO FOR UPDATES

When outages are severe enough to affect large numbers of customers for extended periods of time (generally more than a couple of days), we activate "CHECK" (Central Hudson Emergency Communication networkK) on the following stations:

- **AM Stations:** WGHQ-920; WHUC-1230; WBNR-1260; WALL-1340; WELV-1370; WEOK-1390; WLNA-1420; WKIP-1450; WKNY-1490
- **FM Stations:** WRNQ-92.1; WRRB-92.7; WBPM-92.9; WBWZ-93.3; WZCR-93.5; WKXP-94.3; WPKF-96.1; WRRV-96.9; WZAD-97.3; WCZX-97.7; WKZE-98.1; WCTW-98.5; WFKP-99.3; WDST-100.1; WHUD-100.7; WPDH-101.5; WSPK-104.7; WPDH-106.1; WRWD-107.3



Remember to keep a safe path to electric and gas meters

Clear access to meters facilitates monthly readings, enables safety inspections and avoids estimated bills

Safety, including the safety of our employees, is Central Hudson's highest priority. Because our employees must sometimes access customer property to perform tasks such as reading meters, we urge you to help create a safe environment.

It is important that all customers keep a clear path to electric and/or gas meters

and eliminate all obstructions. Examples of obstructions for both outdoor or indoor meters include snow, ice, vegetation overgrowth, storage boxes, garbage or any other kind of debris. If your meter is not safely accessible, you will be issued an estimated bill for that period. Regulations mandate a maximum fine of \$25 per month for residential customers and

no more than \$100 for commercial customers per building or premises if access is not provided in a timely manner.

It is important that utility personnel be provided access to meters when necessary not only for meter reads, but also for safety. Inspections of natural gas meters are conducted periodically for your safety and the safety of the general public.

Please remember to notify Central Hudson if your meter is located inside your business or behind a locked gate and you change keys or means of entry.

Enjoy the benefit of solar power without installing panels

Solar for All is a New York state utility bill Assistance program. New York state is funding solar farms to benefit homeowners and renters who may not be able to access solar power. Through Solar for All, eligible New Yorkers can get the benefits of clean energy while lowering their energy costs.

You may be eligible to join if you:

- Rent or own your home
- Are a veteran receiving disability benefits

- Are on a fixed income
- Earn a minimum wage
- Participate in HEAP, SNAP, TANF, or other electric bill assistance programs

If you've ever driven past a field of solar panels, you may have wondered why they're there and who they benefit. These solar farms – called community solar – are harnessing the power of the sun in order to provide energy to nearby communities. So-

lar for All gives income-eligible households the opportunity to take advantage of this energy.

By joining Solar for All, you will save on your monthly electricity bill – up to \$180 per year – with no upfront costs or installation hassle. Save energy, save money, and help the planet when you participate in community solar.

To see if you are eligible, visit www.nyserda.ny.gov.

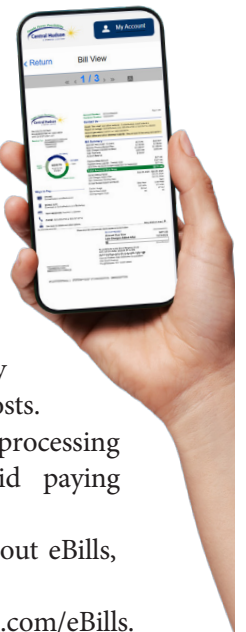
Save time and money with eBills

Avoid unnecessary trips to the mailbox and increasing postage costs with eBills. As an eBills customer, we send you an email notifying you when each bill is ready for your review and action. You receive, view and pay your energy bill entirely online.

Electronic billing gives customers the ability to view recent and past billing statements anytime, anywhere.

You'll save money as an eBills customer by avoiding postage costs. Plus, faster payment processing can help you avoid paying late.

To learn more about eBills, or to sign up, visit www.CentralHudson.com/eBills.



PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR WINTER

Ensure your home is ready for colder weather by:

- ✓ Changing your heating system filter
- ✓ Keeping indoor vents clean and clear
- ✓ Finding and sealing air leaks
- ✓ Getting your chimney inspected
- ✓ Installing a smart thermostat
- ✓ Replacing batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors
- ✓ Schedule preseason tune-ups, including air ducts



Service heating systems for efficiency and safety

Now that the weather has become cooler, heating systems will be turning on more often. Central Hudson reminds its customers to take steps to prepare for winter by servicing their heating systems, installing carbon monoxide (CO) detectors and becoming more energy efficient. 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

CO gas in the home.

Homes and businesses should be equipped with CO detectors as a safety precaution to warn of its presence, and those currently using detectors should replace the batteries regularly. If CO 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.

Know the signs of 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 CO 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.

If you suspect carbon monoxide may be present in your home, shut off the appliance 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.

Protect your home from carbon monoxide:

- **Install CO alarms in your home and test them monthly.** If your alarm has replaceable batteries they should be changed at least every six months. Although you replace your batteries, CO alarms don't last forever. They have a lifetime of anywhere between seven to 10 years, so it is important to check the manufacturer guidelines of each alarm.
- **Keep chimneys and flues free of debris,** and have them cleaned and inspected regularly 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.
- **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.

Save money on energy efficiency improvements with Empower+

EmPower+ helps low- and moderate-income households save money toward energy improvements made to their property.

Through EmPower+, households can receive a no-cost comprehensive home energy assessment to pinpoint where energy and dollars are being wasted and receive a customized plan to lower energy usage.

Households can receive financial discounts on the cost of recommended energy efficiency improvements.

EmPower+ is open to income-eligible owners and renters of 1-4 family households.

Get Started

Step 1. First, you can review the eligibility requirements for EmPower+.

Step 2. Complete and submit an Em-

Power+ application. The application can be completed online, or it can be downloaded, printed and mailed in.

Step 3. As part of the application process, you can select a trained and experienced participating program contractor.

Step 4. Following the approval of your EmPower+ application, the household will be qualified as either low-income or moderate-income eligible. Your contractor will reach out and schedule the home energy assessment.

Step 5. The program contractor will perform the home energy assessment, which identifies opportunities for energy efficiency improvements in the home. During the assessment, the contractor will identify any improvements that can be installed at the time of the home energy as-

essment at no charge to you.

Step 6. Within two weeks of the home energy assessment, a report of findings will be presented by the contractor to the household identifying the ways for the household to save energy.

Step 7. The contractor will develop a workscope based on the assessment findings and provide to the program for approval.

Step 8. Following program approval, the program contractor will go over the workscope with you, discuss out of pocket expenses, if any, and install the approved energy efficiency improvements.

More information, application, contractors and available incentives can be found on the NYSERDA website: www.nyserda.ny.gov/empower.