

BGE Advises Customers to Beware of Utility Imposters

BGE reminds customers to protect themselves from individuals posing as BGE representatives by following these steps:

- Ask for photo identification through the door or window, especially if you did not schedule a visit from BGE.
 - To verify that a visitor to your home or business is a BGE employee, call BGE at **410.685.0123** or **1.800.685.0123**. Operators are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Report suspicious activity to the police and BGE.
- **NEVER** give cash to someone claiming to be collecting a BGE payment in person.

BGE customers have the option of purchasing natural gas and electricity from third-party suppliers. It's important to remember that representatives of those companies may contact customers in person or by mail or telephone. Representatives of third-party suppliers should carry identification from the company for which they work, not BGE. Customers should not hesitate to ask to see identification.



Report Gas Leaks Immediately

Natural gas is colorless, tasteless and odorless, therefore BGE adds a “rotten egg” odor to help you recognize when there’s a potential leak. If you are unsure about what natural gas smells like – call BGE, and we will gladly send you a scratch-and-sniff sample of the odor.

It's important to remember, that gas can enter your building through walls even if you are not supplied with gas.

If you suspect a natural gas leak:

- Extinguish all open flames. Do not use matches or lighters, and do not attempt to light your appliances.
- Do not touch electric switches, thermostats or appliance controls. If the odor is strong, do not use your phone. All of these devices can cause sparks.
- Leave the premise and go to a safe place where you can call BGE at **410.685.0123** or **1.800.685.0123**. TTY/TDD users should call **1.800.735.2258** (Maryland Relay Services). Remain at the safe location and wait for BGE to arrive.

Our Customer Care Center will have a gas mechanic respond promptly to survey the area, perform safety measures and repair BGE's equipment. There is no charge to investigate a gas leak.

This publication was printed using paper containing 10% post-consumer waste.



Contact BGE If the Power Goes Out

If you lose power, don't assume BGE is aware of the problem. Report the outage as soon as possible by calling BGE at **1.877.778.2222**. It's the fastest and most efficient way to report an outage. The number connects you to BGE's Automated Outage Reporting system. By entering the telephone number associated with your account, BGE is able to determine your location.



CONNECTIONS

For BGE Business Customers | www.bge.com/connections | February 2012

JOIN US ON



BGE.COM

Stay WinterReady!

Take the Chill Out of Your Winter Heating Bill

Energy-saving improvements can make a difference in your winter heating bill. Visit bge.com/winterready, where you can find the tools and resources to help you reduce energy consumption and save money. Learn do-it yourself tips, conservation strategies and information about Budget Billing and other BGE programs.

Are You Ready For T12 Lighting Phase-Out?

Responding to federal regulations by July 2012, lighting manufacturers will phase out production of nearly 70 percent of all T12 fluorescent lamps sold in the United States. The T12 lamps affected by these regulations are typically the 4-foot and 8-foot variety that are found in many commercial and industrial facilities. As manufacturers turn to producing more energy-efficient T8 and T5 systems, the supply of T12 lamps will diminish.

Act now to save up to \$65 per fixture to replace or retrofit your T12 lighting.

Don't be left in the dark. With financial incentives up to \$65 per fixture available from BGE's Energy Solutions for Business Program, now is the time to replace or retrofit your T12 fixtures with more energy-efficient technology. Plus, by switching to high-efficiency T5 or T8 fixtures, you'll save up to 45 percent on energy costs every month.

Upgrade and Save!

Whatever your lighting situation, BGE can help you maximize your facility's energy efficiency and reduce your costs. Visit bgesmartenergy.com/T12retrofit for more information.

This program supports EmPOWER Maryland.

The BGE Smart Energy Savers Program®

Reduce Energy Use, Save Money and Improve the Environment

Energy Solutions for Business – BGE offers financial incentives and technical assistance, typically covering up to 50 percent of the total cost for retrofit projects or up to 75 percent of the incremental cost for new construction projects to help maximize energy efficiency and manage energy costs.

Small Business Lighting Solutions – This dynamic, turnkey lighting program is tailored to help small business owners use energy more efficiently. Get up to 80 percent off the total cost for most energy efficiency lighting retrofit projects.

Retrocommissioning (RCx) – BGE's RCx Program seeks to optimize the energy performance of your existing building and its systems by identifying and implementing relatively low-cost operational and maintenance

improvements. Typical energy savings can range from five percent to 15 percent and can provide paybacks in fewer than two years.

In order to provide businesses with these cost-saving programs, a surcharge is added to every customer's monthly bill. The energy efficiency charge appears as a separate line item entitled "EmPower MD Chg." The current electric surcharge (in effect January 1st, 2012) for Rate Schedules G/GS, GL, and P/T will be reflected in the amounts of 0.210, 0.087, and 0.097 cents per kWh, respectively. These rates may be modified during 2012 as the programs for 2012 are finalized. For more information about these programs and all of the energy and money-saving options from the BGE Smart Energy Savers Program, visit bgesmartenergy.com.

Good News at Tax Time

Two Hefty Credits Help Your Employee's Families

Low- and moderate-income families may benefit from two substantial tax credits – the Earned Income Credit and the Child Tax Credit. The income eligibility guidelines and maximum credit amounts for tax year 2011 are listed below:

- Families with one child who **earn less than \$36,052** in 2011 (or less than **\$41,132** for married workers) are eligible for a credit of up to **\$3,094**.
- Families with two children who **earn less than \$40,964** in 2011 (or less than **\$46,044** for married workers) are eligible for a credit of up to **\$5,112**.
- Families with three or more children who **earn less than \$43,998** in 2011 (or less than **\$49,078** for married

workers) are eligible for a credit of up to **\$5,751**.

- Workers without a qualifying child who earn less than **\$13,660** in 2011 (or less than **\$18,740** for married workers) are eligible for a credit of up to **\$464**.
- Investment Income Limit = **\$3,150**.
- Child Tax Credit is up to **\$1,000** per qualifying child.
- The Additional Child Tax Earnings Threshold is **\$3,000** in 2011.

Please contact your tax professional for advice specific to your circumstance.

