

BGE Advises Customers to Beware of Utility Imposters

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

- Do not open your door to someone you do not recognize.
 - 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, 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.

CONNECTIONS

For BGE Residential 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.

Schedule a Quick Home Energy Check-up Today

A Quick Home Energy Check-up is a fast, easy way to increase the energy efficiency of your home and help you start saving immediately. An energy efficiency professional will check insulation, heating and cooling systems, windows, doors, lighting, and appliances. And, if you allow us to install at least three energy-saving measures such as CFLs, water heater tank wrap, water heater pipe insulation; we will waive the \$40 Check-up fee and the cost of the measures. To start saving energy and money, visit bgesmartenergy.com and schedule your Check-up.



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.



Energy-Saving Measures Reduce Customers' Bills, Help the Environment

The BGE Smart Energy Savers Program® includes a variety of options to help customers conserve energy, save money, and help the environment.

An EmPOWER Maryland charge is included in BGE customers' monthly BGE bill in order to provide these money-saving programs. The current electric charge (effective with January 2012 billings) includes both the PeakRewardsSM and Energy Efficiency surcharges and is 0.203 cents per kWh or \$2.03 for an average home using 1,000 kWh per month. The average residential gas customer who consumes 58 therms per month will see a monthly gas surcharge (effective with January 2012 billings) of \$0.93 at the 1.61 cents per therm rate for the energy efficiency programs. These rates may be modified during 2012 as the programs for 2012 are finalized.

While the PeakRewards surcharge has decreased and the Energy Efficiency portion has increased, customers can offset the electric charge through simple energy savings methods such as purchasing four CFL bulbs through the Lighting Discount Program, signing up for a Quick Home Energy Check-up, or taking advantage of other BGE

Smart Energy Savers Program discounts and rebates.

Demand response and energy efficiency programs, like PeakRewards and rebates and discounts offered for ENERGY STAR® qualified measures as part of BGE's Smart Energy Savers Program benefit all BGE customers. You can help to control energy use and reduce energy costs by participating in these programs. Using less energy reduces the need for new power plants and distribution system upgrades, saving money for all customers. Everyone reaps the environmental benefits of reducing emissions from electricity generation plants and reducing the amount of electricity that generation plants need to provide. Since the launch of these programs, BGE customers will save over 7.4 million lifecycle MWh of gross energy through purchase and installation of energy saving measures. This is the equivalent of removing CO2 emissions from approximately 11.8 million barrels of oil or reducing the number of greenhouse gas emissions by over 1 million cars.

For more information about the BGE Smart Energy Savers Program and to learn how you can participate, visit bgesmartenergy.com.

Good News at Tax Time

Two Hefty Credits Can Help Working 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.