

# THE BUSINESS CONSUMER Reference Book 2010



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# 2010 BUSINESS CONSUMER Reference Book

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## CUSTOMER SERVICE

As your energy delivery company, BGE wants to provide you with helpful information on our services and programs. This booklet covers everything from meter installation to stopping your service. It has been prepared in compliance with the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 20.30.04. All programs and charges listed in this booklet are those in effect at the time of printing. For updates, visit [bge.com](http://bge.com). We welcome your comments and suggestions.

### Hours of operation

Our customer care representatives are ready to serve you. Business hours are Monday 8 a.m. to midnight on Friday. Emergency service is available 24 hours a day. Foreign language interpreters are available.

### How to contact us

Phone: Important phone numbers are listed on the back cover  
Online: [bge.com](http://bge.com) | Mail: P.O. Box 1475, Baltimore, MD 21203  
Power Outages: 1.877.778.2222

### Emergencies

To report fallen power lines, electric, or natural gas emergencies, immediately call BGE at 410.685.0123 or 1.800.685.0123.

### Holiday Hours

BGE business offices will be closed for the following 2009 holidays:

- November 26 and 27 in observance of **Thanksgiving**.
- December 24 and December 25 in observance of the **holiday season**.
- January 1 in observance of **New Year's**.

If you have a gas or electric emergency during our holiday hours, call us at the emergency number listed above.

### Bilingual Customer Services

Hay disponible intérpretes de idiomas extranjeros para ayudar a los clientes de lunes a viernes entre las 8 a.m. y 12 a.m. Llame a uno de los teléfonos que se encuentran en la contraportada.

Foreign-language interpreters are available to assist customers – call one of the phone numbers listed on the back cover.

### [bge.com](http://bge.com)

Many of our account services, as well as helpful news, information and tips are available 24/7 online at [bge.com](http://bge.com).

### Customer Newsletter

Throughout the year we will provide you with more information on our services and programs through *Connections*, our customer newsletter, and through other informative inserts included with your bill.

## ACCOUNT INFORMATION

### Starting or Stopping Gas and Electric Service

**To Start or Stop Utility Service** – contact BGE at least three business days prior to your move date. See back cover for our contact information. In some cases we may require that you provide your lease or settlement documentation, corporate/business papers, and proof of identification.

**To Transfer or Discontinue Service** – Remember, you are responsible and will be billed for all service used at your present address until you notify us to transfer or discontinue utility service. To ensure billing is stopped at the appropriate time, please notify BGE at least three business days prior to your move. You will need to provide BGE access to the meters on the premises.

**Submit Your Moving Request** – BGE will accept either a written or verbal request to start, stop, transfer gas and/or electric service. Service requests are accepted via phone or mail. See back cover for our contact information.

### Security Deposit

BGE may require a deposit to open or maintain an account. Non-residential deposits are based on the maximum estimated usage for service for two consecutive billing periods or 90 days, and may be paid in two installments if requested. Deposits plus earned interest are reviewed for refund after four years from the date paid in full.

Consideration for refund includes a customer's payment history, current status of accounts, plus information that may be obtained from business credit reporting agencies. Deposits not refunded are reviewed annually, thereafter. Refunds are applied first against any balances owing for that account, then against any other delinquent or final charges open for any other account in that customer's name, with any excess monies then refunded. A refund may take up to 45 days. If a material change from the basis upon which service and credit were originally established occurs, BGE may require the establishment of a new deposit or payment of any deposit deficiency.

### Service Application Charge

Your service application charge is a non-refundable fee that covers initial administrative start-up costs. The amount of this charge is determined by your particular rate schedule.

## BILLING

### Understanding Your Bill

Your BGE bill provides detailed information to help you understand how you are billed for the energy used to power your business. An

overview of electric and/or gas charges are shown on the front of the bill. The details (an explanation of the charges) are shown on the back of the bill. Your bill also provides “Your Price to Compare” rate to use when shopping for electricity.

- The electric portion of your BGE bill consists of three parts:
  1. Customer Charge – the fixed monthly fee for metering, billing and other services.
  2. Electric Supply – “supply” is the actual electric commodity consumed. Note: This is the deregulated part of your electric service that is open to competition. See Choice on page 6 for details.
  3. Electric Delivery Service – “delivery”, also called distribution, is the process of delivering electricity to you along a network of power lines called the “local distribution system”.
- The Gas portion (if applicable) of your BGE bill consists of three parts:
  1. Customer Charge – the fixed monthly fee for metering, billing and other services.
  2. Gas Supply – “supply” is the actual gas commodity consumed. Note: *This is the deregulated part of your gas service that is open to competition. See Choice on page 8 for details.*
  3. Gas Delivery Service – “delivery”, also called distribution, represents BGE’s costs to deliver the gas to your business.

### **Seasonal Rate Difference**

BGE’s small commercial electric supply rates (Type I) change twice each year on June 1 and October 1. BGE’s large commercial electric supply rates change quarterly. BGE’s gas supply rates change monthly. BGE does not charge seasonal rates for the delivery of your energy.

### **Questions About Your Bill**

If you have questions or concerns about your bill (accuracy, billing dates, how to save energy, etc.) please call us. Visit [bge.com](http://bge.com) for more details and to view a sample bill.

## **METER READING and BILLING ACCURACY**

Your BGE gas and electric meters are precision instruments that measure how much energy you use. Because your bill is based on meter readings, our meters are subject to regulation by the Maryland Public Service Commission. Each year BGE inspects a random sample of each of the types of meters used on our system to ensure that the meters are registering accurately. BGE also tests meters upon customer request. Note: *Bills are occasionally based on estimated meter reads when BGE is unable to obtain an actual meter reading.*

## PAYING YOUR BILL

### Payment Due Date

Payments are due to us by the date shown on the front of your bill. Payments postmarked on the due date, but received at our payment center after the due date will be assessed a late charge.

### Late Payment

Late payment charges apply to bills not paid by the current due date. The total late payment charges do not exceed 5 percent of the original unpaid amount.

### Returned Check Fee

We charge a \$15 fee for a returned check. A cash payment or a certified check or money order for the amount of the returned check is required.

### Disconnection of Service

Service may be disconnected for a number of reasons, such as nonpayment of utility bills or security deposit; failure to allow us access to our equipment; safety issues and violation of the Code of Maryland Regulations or BGE Electric or Gas Service Tariff Provisions. The amount of advance notice also varies based on the reason for disconnection.

### Reconnection of Service

To have service reconnected, customers must pay the amount of the current and past-due bills in full, applicable reconnection fees, and any required deposit. If a check used for payment of a turnoff notice or for service restoration is returned by the bank, the service is subject to denial without further notification.

### Right to Appeal/Resolving Complaints

You have the right to appeal a proposed utility service disconnection. BGE will review your case, make a decision, and inform you promptly of our findings. If you have a question or problem that has not been resolved to your satisfaction, ask to speak with a BGE supervisor. If you still have concerns, you can also contact the Maryland Public Service Commission (Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., except holidays) with questions or to file an appeal:

Maryland Public Service Commission  
Office of External Relations  
6 St. Paul Street, 15th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202  
410.767.8028 or 1.800.492.0474 toll free  
1.800.735.2258 TTY/TDD (Maryland Relay Service)  
Fax: 410.333.6844 | Email: [mpsc@psc.state.md.us](mailto:mpsc@psc.state.md.us)

## PAYMENT OPTIONS

Partial bill payments are applied to gas and electric service first, then to any other services or purchases including those you may buy from other suppliers.

### Online

- **bge.com** – Receive and pay your bills online at [bge.com](http://bge.com). It's convenient, easy, and best of all FREE.
- **Check Free** – Pay your BGE bill and many other bills at [mycheckfree.com](http://mycheckfree.com) or for a service fee of 3.2% of the payment amount you can use [www.SpeedPay.com](http://www.SpeedPay.com)
- **Your Bank** – Many banks offer bill payment service where you can view and pay your bill online.

### Telephone

Call 1.888.232.0088 to pay your BGE bill from your checking account, debit card, MasterCard or Discover credit card.

Note: *A fee will be charged for this service.*

### Mail

Mail the bottom portion of your bill and your check or money order (DO NOT SEND CASH) in the self-addressed envelope included with each month's bill. Send payments to: BGE, P.O. Box 13070, Philadelphia, PA 19101-3070. Please do not include other correspondence with your payment. Contact BGE directly.

### Alternate Payment Centers

Payments are accepted on all BGE bills including turn-off notices. Payments can be made with or without your bill if you provide your account number. Same-day restoration service is available if a payment is made prior to 3 p.m. (Extended daily and weekend service hours may be available.)

- **America's Cash Express** locations require a \$1.50 processing fee except at the following free locations: 407 W. Baltimore St., 21201 and 1312 Eastern Blvd., 21221. For the closest payment location, call 1.800.698.1779.
- **Global Express** locations require a \$1.00 processing fee. For the closest payment location, call 1.800.989.6669.

### BGEasy

Automatically pay your BGE bill each month by direct debit from your checking or savings account. To apply, fill out an application and send us a blank, voided check. Visit [bge.com](http://bge.com) or call us for an application.

### Budget Billing

The Budget Billing Program, available to many business customers, is designed to help customers manage their bills by building credits in low-usage months in order to help handle

higher bills expected during higher usage months. Budget Billing customers are charged the same rates and have the same options as other customers. The only difference is that Budget Billing payments are spread out evenly from month to month. So that customers don't have large balances or credits owed, the budget billing amount is reviewed regularly. If your payment amount needs to be adjusted up or down, we will notify you the month prior to the change. We pay simple interest on any credit balance. This means that we pay you if we are holding your money, but we do not charge you if you owe us money. There is no charge for this billing option. To sign up, call BGE. If you choose another energy supplier you can still participate in BGE's Budget Billing for the BGE delivery portion of your bill. Some suppliers may offer their own "Budget Billing" for supply if you choose to shop.

## CHOICE

Energy in Maryland is deregulated, which means you can choose the supplier for natural gas and/or electricity who best meets your needs. No matter who supplies your energy, BGE is responsible for delivering the energy, maintaining the distribution system, and handling emergencies to ensure you have safe and reliable energy service. Need more information?

- Visit [bge.com](http://bge.com) for a list of qualified suppliers.
- Call our Energy Choice Line at 1.877.PHONBGE (1.877.746.6243) for a FREE copy of BGE's Energy Choice brochure

## SAVING ENERGY

### Five Easy Energy Tips

1. Lower thermostat settings: winter - 68°F; summer 78°F
2. Install a programmable thermostat
3. Plug air leaks
4. Use compact fluorescent lights
5. Eliminate unnecessary use of your HVAC system during unoccupied hours

**For more energy and money saving tips and tools visit [BGESmartEnergy.com](http://BGESmartEnergy.com).**

### Helpful Energy Saving Resources

- Update the efficiency of your office equipment with ENERGY STAR® – visit [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov) for details.
- Visit the Maryland Energy Administration's web site at [www.energy.state.md.us](http://www.energy.state.md.us) for helpful energy efficiency tips.

- The Energy Information Administration (EIA) provides businesses with independent policy data, forecasts, and analysis on various energy issues. For additional information visit EIA online at [www.eia.doe.gov](http://www.eia.doe.gov).

## ENERGY SAFETY

*(download our Energy Safety Tips brochure online at [bge.com](http://bge.com))*

### Electric Safety

**Fallen Wires** – During storms, wind and trees can damage utility equipment. If you see downed electrical wires, stay away and warn others. Immediately call us, and we'll send a crew to fix the problem. If a wire falls across your car while you are in it, **do not get out of the car** until emergency help arrives.

**Overhead Lines** – When working outside stay at least 10-ft away from overhead power lines. If you need to work within the 10-ft safety zone, call us first and we will work with you to make the area safe. Also, use a professional to trim trees near overhead power lines.

### Gas Safety

**If you smell a gas leak**

- Extinguish all open flames. Do not use matches or lighters, and do not attempt to light your appliance.
- 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 premises and go to a safe place where you can call BGE (phone numbers listed on back cover). Remain at a safe location and wait for BGE to arrive. BGE provides 24-hour emergency service, every day of the year. There is no charge to make the condition safe.

***Not sure what natural gas smells like? We will gladly send you a scratch-and-sniff sample of the odor.***

A U.S. Department of Transportation regulation requires all natural gas utilities to notify gas customers of their gas line maintenance responsibilities. BGE owns and maintains all natural gas piping up to and including the gas meter. BGE strives to provide all of our customers safe, reliable service while ensuring that gas piping owned by the company is properly maintained to avoid the potentially damaging effects of leaks and corrosion.

Each gas customer is responsible for the maintenance and monitoring of all aboveground and buried pipe after the meter. If such piping is not maintained, it may corrode and leak. You should periodically inspect buried gas piping located after the

meter for leaks and corrosion, and repair it if any unsafe condition is discovered.

To find contractors who can perform maintenance and repairs of gas fuel piping in your home, after the meter, please look up “Plumbing Contractors” in the yellow pages of the telephone directory – look for plumbers who are state certified to work on gas piping.

### **Carbon Monoxide Safety**

Carbon monoxide poisoning is usually caused by incomplete combustion and inadequate ventilation. Signs of buildup of this colorless, odorless gas include:

- Stuffy, stale, or smelly air
- High humidity
- Soot from fireplaces or furnaces

The best treatment for overexposure is to get lots of fresh air and immediate medical attention. To reduce risk of carbon monoxide poisoning, gas and oil appliance manufacturers recommend a yearly safety check-up. A qualified heating contractor can perform this service.

### **Tampering**

Theft of gas or electricity is dangerous and a crime. Tampering with utility lines, meters, or other BGE equipment or installing illegal connections creates dangerous conditions for building occupants and neighbors.

If you know of or suspect any gas or electric thefts, call our BGE Energy Theft Hotline at 1.800.417.0294. You do not have to give your name—all information will be kept confidential.

### **Damage Prevention/Miss Utility**

Always call 811 before you dig. The one call notification service helps help protect you from unintentionally hitting underground utility lines while working on digging projects. Underground utilities will be marked using the following colors:

Red	Electric
Yellow	Gas, Oil, or Steam
Orange	Communications (Telephone or CATV)
Blue	Water
Green	Sewer
White	Proposed Excavation
Purple	Reclaimed Water

Visit [www.missutility.net](http://www.missutility.net) for more information.

## Meter Safety

- To ensure meter safety, keep your outside meter and attached equipment clear of ice buildup and snow.
- Don't allow children to play on or vandalize outside meters.
- Keep a clear pathway to the meter.

## RELIABILITY

### Power out? Call BGE'S toll-free number 1.877.778.2222

To ensure the fastest possible restoration service, BGE has an exclusive toll-free number for reporting electric outages only. The number connects you to an automated phone system, that helps BGE pinpoint your location by matching it with your phone number. So, if your power goes out, notify us immediately – any day, any hour.

### Emergency Preparedness

Power outages can last from minutes to hours, even days, depending on the severity of the storm. If a storm causes widespread damage to our system, it can take days to assess the problem and additional time to restore power to all customers. Being prepared is a great way to weather storms. Visit [bge.com](http://bge.com) for specific safety tips.

### Storm Restoration

BGE has a detailed plan for restoring electrical service after a power outage. Our first priority is the safety of personnel and the public. While our goal is to always restore power to the greatest number of customers in the shortest amount of time, medical and emergency services receive first priority. Then we repair main power lines and equipment that will restore the most power to the most customers at once, and finally, we restore individual transformers and smaller lines to individual homes and businesses.

### Streetlight Repair

Streetlight out? Report it online at [bge.com](http://bge.com) or call 410.685.0123.

### Service Reliability Information

BGE monitors the performance of the gas and electric system in order to assure service reliability. Each year BGE must file a report with the Public Service Commission that includes certain measures of reliability based on the number of interruptions experienced by customers as well as the length of time that customers are interrupted. The report also describes what steps BGE is taking to improve reliability. If you are interested in information about your electric service reliability, please contact us.



## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

**For Gas or Electric Emergencies** .....410.685.0123  
(For example, if you smell gas or see downed electric wires)

**Report Power Outage** .....1.877.778.2222  
(As information becomes available, this number will also be updated with repair and restoration information.)

### **BGE General Questions**

Baltimore Metropolitan Area .....410.265.4100

All Other Areas .....1.800.265.6177

Hearing-Impaired Customers—

TTY/TDD (Maryland Relay Service) .....1.800.735.2258

### **Collection Questions**

Baltimore Metropolitan Area .....410.783.5926

All Other Areas .....1.800.492.7575

**Energy Theft Hotline** .....1.800.417.0294

**Energy Choice Line** .....1.877.PHON.BGE  
(1.877.746.6243)

**MISS UTILITY** .....811

### **Natural Gas Installation and Conversion**

Baltimore Metropolitan Area .....410.265.4100

All Other Areas .....1.800.265.6177

**Business eXpress Line** .....410.265.4100



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Baltimore, MD 21203-1475

[bge.com](http://bge.com)



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