

The Spotlight

PIE&G
PRESQUE ISLE ELECTRIC AND GAS CO-OP



A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

What's Inside

- SmartHub is Here!
- Spring Storm Preparation
- Home Heating Credits
- Energy Theft
- Portable Generator Safety

March 2016



SmartHub has arrived!

Manage your PIE&G account from your PC, Smartphone or tablet.

You can...

- Pay Your Bill
- Report Meter Readings
- Track Payment & Usage History
- Access Billing Statements
- Set up Notifications via Email or Text

BE PREPARED FOR SPRING STORMS

Lightning from thunderstorms kills more people each year than tornadoes or hurricanes, according to the American Red Cross. As spring arrives, make sure you're prepared to handle storms that come with the changing season. Follow these tips from the Red Cross to stay safe.



Stay away from downed power lines. Electricity could still be flowing through them. Report them immediately to PIE&G at (800) 423-6634.

Hear thunder? Head inside. If you can hear it, you could be in danger from lightning. The National Weather Service recommends you stay indoors at least 30 minutes after the last

clap of thunder. If you're outside and can't seek shelter indoors, avoid high ground, water, tall isolated trees, and metal objects like bleachers or fences.

Unplug your electronics. Avoid using electrical items and telephones, which can carry power surges. Keep a battery-powered TV or radio on hand for weather updates.

Delay outdoor activities. If conditions are right for a thunderstorm, postpone the baseball game and stay inside—it doesn't have to be raining for lightning to strike.

Assemble an emergency preparedness kit with:

- Water: one gallon per person, per day
- Non-perishable food
- Flashlight & fresh batteries
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (preferably NOAA weather radio) & extra batteries
- First-aid kit
- Seven-day supply of prescription medicines
- Copies of personal documents
- Cell phone with charger
- Emergency contact information
- Cash

Source: American Red Cross



HOME HEATING CREDITS

PIE&G accepts 'Energy Drafts' issued to members eligible for a Home Heating Credit if it is used to pay a *home heating bill* and the name on the energy draft matches the name on the account. Both parties must sign to endorse payment if the draft is issued in two names.

Visit www.michigan.gov/heatingassistance and click on Home Heating Credit for more information.

ENERGY THEFT IS ILLEGAL & DANGEROUS!

Energy theft is generally classified as any interference with a utility's ability to bill a customer. For example, if you are a tenant, it is important to transfer the account and take responsibility for service from the date you move in. Keeping service on in the previous tenant's name is considered energy theft.

Unauthorized utility connections ("meter tampering") is the most dangerous kind of energy theft that poses serious safety risks resulting in fires, explosions, electrocution injuries or even death. These illegal and hazardous connections endanger everyone – the person making the illegal connection and anyone nearby, but also utility workers and surrounding property.

Michigan law aims to deter unauthorized use or connections of electric and natural gas while protecting consumers from increased utility costs related to energy theft. It is a crime for any person to use, sell or transfer electricity or natural gas to another person, knowing or having reason to know that the product or service was obtained unlawfully.

Penalties for assault or interference with a utility worker or contractor performing his or her duties range from a misdemeanor to a felony, punishable by up to 10 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine for a worker's death.

PIE&G will take immediate action to shut off service where unsafe and unauthorized use is found. Reconnection will be on hold until all costs are paid. The Co-op may also pursue criminal prosecution against the tenant or property owner where the energy theft occurred.

Source: www.michigan.gov

PORTABLE GENERATORS

Please Do Not Put Someone's Life in Danger!

Take special care with portable electric generators, which can provide a good source of power, but if improperly installed or operated, can become deadly. Do not connect generators directly to household wiring. Power from generators can back-feed along power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including utility line workers making repairs. A qualified, licensed electrician should install your generator to ensure that it meets local electrical codes.



Other tips include:

- Make sure your generator is properly grounded.
- Keep the generator dry.
- Make sure extension cords used with generators are rated for the load, and are free of cuts, worn insulation, and have three-pronged plugs.
- Do not overload the generator.
- Do not operate the generator in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces. Generators can produce high levels of carbon monoxide very quickly, which can be deadly.
- Use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) to help prevent electrocutions and electrical shock injuries. Portable GFCIs require no tools to install and are available at prices ranging from \$12 to \$30.

EASTER HOLIDAY HOURS

PIE&G will be closed March 25 in observance of Good Friday. The office will be open for business again on Monday, March 28.



Access your account anytime on your PC, tablet or smartphone at pieg.com. You may also pay or report readings by calling 1-866-999-4571.

Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op

19831 M-68 Hwy • P.O. Box 308 • Onaway, MI 49765 • 989-733-8515 • 800-423-6634 • www.pieg.com

GAS EMERGENCY ONLY 1-800-655-8565

We will gladly accept your Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express. No additional charge for using your credit card.



Most natural gas rates and charges are not regulated by the Michigan Public Service Commission.