

# Energy Lines

January 2004

VALUABLE CUSTOMER INFORMATION

## IMPORTANT SAFETY REMINDERS ABOUT emergency generators

Emergency generators have become a popular way to supply stand-by electricity.

When properly sized, installed and operated, stand-by generators (also known as emergency or back-up generators), can safely power electrical equipment during power interruptions. However, you must follow proper procedures, or you may place yourself and your family at serious risk. Also, improperly operated generators can feed electricity back into NYSEG's lines, placing NYSEG people who are working to restore service in danger.



► **If you own or intend to purchase a stand-by generator for your home or business, please keep the following safety information in mind.**

- Read, understand and follow the manufacturer's instructions for your unit.
- To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, always operate your generator **outdoors**, well away from any open windows.
- To prevent electrical shock, be sure your unit is **properly grounded**.
- After a power interruption – and before starting your generator – turn off your main circuit breaker or pull your main fuse block.
- **NEVER** connect a generator to an existing wiring system **without using a double pole-double throw (DPDT) transfer switch**.
- **Do not overload** your generator by operating too many appliances at once.
- Make sure all electrical connections comply with the National Electric Code.

**Other important generator information inside!**

# EMERGENCY GENERATOR INFORMATION

## ► Types of Stand-by Generators

While generators come in a variety of sizes, they generally fall into two categories: portable and stationary units. **Portable** generators are typically smaller, stand-alone units that are not connected to any existing wiring system.

Extension cords connect the generator to selected electrical equipment or appliances.

**Stationary**, or **integrated** generators are typically much larger. They are built-in units connected directly to the wiring system of a home or business.



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According to the National Electric Code, all integrated units must use a double-pole, double throw (DPDT) transfer switch to safely isolate the generator from NYSEG power lines.

## ► A Special Note About Natural Gas-fired Generators

Many generators that are fueled by natural gas require a delivery pressure that's greater than NYSEG's standard pressure. If the generator is not supplied with the manufacturer's suggested delivery pressure, the generator may not run.

*Before purchasing a natural gas-fired generator, you should contact NYSEG at 1.800.572.1111 to ensure that an elevated delivery pressure is available to your home or business.* This is **NOT** available in all areas.

If an elevated delivery pressure is available, changes to your natural gas service may be required so that your generator operates properly. If so, additional NYSEG charges will apply. Also, you will need to purchase and install a pressure-reducing device for your other natural gas appliances.



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NYSEG requires that all natural gas-fired generators be inspected by a certified electrical inspection agency or local building code enforcement inspector.

## ► Important to Note

**If not properly connected and grounded, your generator may feed electricity back into NYSEG's power lines. You may be liable for damage or injury to your neighbors and to NYSEG workers and equipment that may result from an improperly installed or operated emergency generator.**

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**For more information, check out our brochure "Emergency Generator Safety" at [nyseg.com](http://nyseg.com) (click on "Brochures") or call us at 1.800.572.1111.**

# Meter access is important

Regular meter readings help ensure that you're billed for the exact amount of energy you use. If you have an outdoor meter and you are able to, please keep a path to the meter cleared. Our meter readers really appreciate it!

And if you're a Balanced Billing customer, please remember that regular meter readings help you avoid a big credit or a large amount due at the end of your budget year.



**☎ If access to an indoor meter is a problem, just give us a call at 1.800.572.1111.**

## A natural gas fireplace

*adds comfort*



Natural gas hearth products are available to fit every taste and budget from inserts to freestanding stoves to direct vent fireplaces, and more. A natural gas fireplace or stove adds instant charm and cozy warmth to your home, with no wood to haul and no ashes to clean up.

▶ **For more information, visit your local hearth products dealer.**

## Help warm some hearts and homes

Project SHARE is an energy assistance fund that helps elderly and disabled customers cope with unexpected energy emergencies. Last year, more than \$300,000 in grants helped your neighbors in need. You can help make sure the dollars are there to assist people this winter. Just add \$1, \$2 or \$5 to your next NYSEG payment. It will automatically go to Project SHARE (and it's tax deductible!). For more information visit [nyseg.com](http://nyseg.com).



♥ **Project SHARE is a joint effort of NYSEG and the American Red Cross.**

## HEAP CAN HELP WITH HEATING BILLS

Many households receive financial

assistance from **HEAP – the federal Home Energy Assistance Program. Grants can be used to pay heating bills or for other energy-related emergencies. Income-eligible customers should apply early, since funds are limited. For more information or to apply, contact your county's Department of Social Services or Office for Aging.**



# What's happening with natural gas prices?

NYSEG's natural gas **delivery** prices are frozen where they have been since 1995. By contrast, market-based natural gas **supply** prices – what you pay for the natural gas you use – are higher than in recent years. These market-based prices are determined by supply and demand, and NYSEG makes no money on the **supply** portion of your natural gas bill.

Weather also has a major affect on your natural gas bills. The colder it is, the more natural gas you're likely to use. And, the more you use, the more you can expect to pay, just as with any product.

To help manage your energy costs, now may be a good time to enroll in NYSEG's Balanced Billing program, which lets you spread your NYSEG energy costs evenly over 12 months. For more information, visit [nyseg.com](http://nyseg.com) or call us at 1.800.572.1111.



Rest assured  
that we don't  
anticipate any  
problems  
obtaining and  
delivering the  
natural gas  
you need  
this winter.



◀ Click on this symbol at [nyseg.com](http://nyseg.com) for more information about energy prices and use.

## Tips for using energy wisely

- Have your heating system checked every year to make sure it is safe and working efficiently.
- Clean or replace furnace filters when they get dirty or once a month.
- Be sure heating supply and return registers are clean and not blocked by furniture or draperies.
- Set your thermostat at 65° during the day and lower it to 60° at night (May not be advisable if you have frail, ill or young people in your home).
- Consider installing automatic set-back thermostats.
- Open blinds and drapes on south-facing windows during the day to let in heat from the sun. Close them at night and on cloudy days.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions to set your water heater at 120 degrees.
- Install flow restrictors in showers and on faucets to reduce water use.

