

# Columbia Gas of Ohio Quarterly Community Update Northeast and North Central Ohio



## Winter Bill Assistance

Worried about paying the gas bill? Payment assistance grants are available for income-eligible customers. And there are several payment plans open to all customers. Visit [ColumbiaGasOhio.com/WinterHelp](http://ColumbiaGasOhio.com/WinterHelp) or call the customer care team at 1-800-344-4077 to learn more about Winter Crisis, HEAP, PIPP Plus and other programs. You can also connect on Facebook, Twitter or Nextdoor.

If you know someone who is struggling to pay or falling behind on their bill, please encourage them to reach out to Columbia Gas today. One phone call can help connect them with the services and assistance they need.

## COVID-19 Protocols

While the pandemic has created challenges for everyone, Columbia Gas is still working to safely deliver natural gas to communities across the state. Should a crew need to work inside a home, here are some of the safety measures employees and contractors are taking:

- Daily health assessments and temperature checks
- Wearing a face covering in accordance with state orders
- Maintaining at least six feet of social distance
- Using additional protective gear when needed
- Cleaning work surfaces



Columbia Gas respectfully requests that when interacting with employees customers also wear a face covering (if able) and maintain at least six feet of social distance.

For any questions on COVID-19 protocols or information on available help for those who may be struggling during the pandemic, please call 1-800-344-4077 or visit [columbiagasohio.com/campaigns/covid-19](http://columbiagasohio.com/campaigns/covid-19).

## Charitable Giving

Through its Columbia Cares Program, Columbia Gas donates time, money and resources each year to local philanthropic programs and organizations. Because of the health and economic struggles brought on by COVID-19, Columbia Gas has narrowed its focus to supporting customers with their very basic needs. Examples of recent donations include grants to Second Harvest Food Bank in support of drive-through mobile pantries in Lorain County and the Salem Community Pantry in an effort to help alleviate food insecurity in Columbiana County. Columbia Gas thanks all of its nonprofit partners for the incredible work they are doing amidst difficult circumstances.

Any 501(c)(3) interested in learning more about the Columbia Gas grant process should visit [columbiagasohio.com/columbiacares](http://columbiagasohio.com/columbiacares).



## Safety Messages



### Stop.Leave.Call

Natural gas is safe and reliable but for a variety of reasons, leaks can sometimes occur. Natural gas is also colorless and odorless in its purest form, but Columbia Gas adds an odorant called Mercaptan to give it that distinctive sulfur-like rotten egg scent. If you ever smell the odor, **STOP** what you are doing, **LEAVE** the area immediately and from a safe place **CALL** 911 and then Columbia Gas at 1-800-344-4077. Crews will respond 24/7/365. There is no charge for gas leak investigations.

### Cross Bores

Cross bores are inadvertent intersections of an existing underground utility by a second utility. This intersection may compromise the integrity of both utilities. A cross-bore can go undetected for months or even years. Eventually, if a sewer backup develops, a plumber or homeowner may attempt to clear the blockage, often with a mechanical rotary device. This practice can damage the utility line and create an unsafe situation allowing natural gas to migrate into homes and buildings.



Before attempting to clear a blocked sewer line, call 811 so that utility lines can be marked. It's the best way to ensure the sewer line is free of cross-bores and to avoid a potentially unsafe situation. For more information on cross bores, visit [columbiagasohio.com/safety/natural-gas-safety/sewer-line-safety](http://columbiagasohio.com/safety/natural-gas-safety/sewer-line-safety). If you believe you have a cross bore, call 1-800-344-4077.

## Energy Efficiency Programs

Energy Efficiency programs can help save energy and money – plus keep homes more comfortable. Check out the Columbia Gas Home Energy Audit program. Right now, it's half price -- just \$25 when you schedule by April 30th and use the code *HOME* at sign up. Customers will receive energy-saving products at no cost when needed, a safety check of their natural gas furnace, draft and insulation testing, plus a personalized report with potential rebates for energy efficiency upgrades. To learn more, call 1-877-644-6674 or visit [ColumbiaGasOhio.com/HomeEnergyAudit](http://ColumbiaGasOhio.com/HomeEnergyAudit).

Customers can also visit the [online store](http://online store) for rebates on smart thermostats and other energy-saving devices.

## Utility Scams

Scammers may try to target customers by impersonating a Columbia Gas employee or contractor. Columbia Gas will never call customers directly to demand immediate payment or to ask for account or financial information. If you are ever unsure...

- Ask for ID – Employees and contractors wear their ID visibly.
- Call – If you are skeptical about a phone call, email, program, or interaction with someone claiming to be affiliated with Columbia Gas, please call 1-800-344-4077.