

Midwest Energy, Inc.

Current Comments

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Making energy work for YOU

Hail Damage Brings Potentially Deadly Risk Check Rooftop Vents to Prevent CO Poisoning

Hail storms this year have pounded several counties in Midwest Energy's service area. If your area experi-

enced hail storms severe enough to damage vehicles and roofs, it's possible that storms may also have also damaged the aluminum and steel exhaust vents on your roof, as they're often made of a thinner metal than that found on automobile bodies. Damaged vents could lead to a deadly situation where gas appliances like water heaters and furnaces can't vent exhaust gas adequately, causing deadly carbon monoxide gas (CO) to back up into the home.

Even minor damage or blockage can cause CO to back up into your home. CO is a colorless, odorless gas that is a by-product of combustion. The only way homeowners could know if CO is present is with a carbon monoxide detector, available for about \$30 at most hardware and department stores. Some CO detectors also double as smoke detectors, offering additional safety. Early signs of CO poisoning include flu-like symptoms: dizziness, weakness, headaches and nausea. Symptoms of more prolonged exposure include vomiting, burning eyes, disorientation, partial loss of muscular control and sleepiness. If you feel these symptoms, get people and pets to fresh air immediately and call 911. CO can overtake even healthy adults in minutes, so summon medical help immediately.



Damaged or covered gas exhaust vents prevent carbon monoxide (CO) from properly venting, and can lead to a deadly buildup of CO inside the home. CO is colorless and odorless, and only a carbon monoxide detector can alert homeowners to its presence. The Centers for Disease Control estimates 400 Americans die in their homes from unintentional CO exposure. The images above were taken after hail storms in Sheridan County in June 2024.

Midwest Energy encourages homeowners with storm damage to go outside and, from the ground, visually inspect rooftop gas exhaust vents. If the vents are dented or smashed flat, contact a licensed roofer or HVAC person to inspect your vents up close, and make appropriate repairs before heating season arrives.

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Cold Weather Rule Goes Into Effect Nov. 1

Midwest Energy complies with the terms of the Kansas Corporation Commission's Cold Weather Rule (CWR). The CWR is in effect from Nov. 1 through March 31.



The CWR allows for special payments and disconnection procedures for any Kansas residential electric or natural gas customer with an unpaid balance during the cold weather period. The CWR prohibits disconnection of service when the local National Weather Service forecasts temperatures to fall below

35 degrees in the next 48 hours. To prevent disconnection when it's 35 degrees or above, or to be reconnected, customers must make payment arrangements with Midwest Energy.

For residential customers to avoid service disconnection or to restore service during the CWR period, they must:

1. Contact Midwest Energy and inform the co-op of inability to pay the bill in full;
2. Provide sufficient information to Midwest Energy to allow the company to make payment arrangements;
3. Make an initial payment of 1/12 the past due amount, plus 1/12 of the current bill, the full amount of

any disconnection or reconnection fees, plus any applicable deposit, and enter into an 11-month payment plan for the remaining balance;

4. Apply for any assistance funds for which the customer is eligible. This can include governmental assistance, as well as private programs such as Midwest Customers Care (MCC). Customers must authorize Midwest Energy to send a copy of all bills and notices to a third party.

Midwest Energy sends written notice 10 days before a disconnection, plus attempts a phone call or personal contact 48 hours before disconnection.

To learn more about the CWR, visit www.kcc.ks.gov.

Help a Neighbor With Midwest Customers Care

Midwest Energy provides bill payment assistance to low income customers through the Midwest Customers Care program. It is funded by voluntary donations from Midwest Energy customers and employees, and is administered by The Salvation Army.

Qualifying Midwest Energy customers must have a household income less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level and may not receive more than \$200 per heating season. Assistance is available from Jan. 1 through Aug. 31, or when the funding is exhausted, whichever comes first. To apply for energy assistance, please call The Salvation

Amy at 1-816-756-5392 and select option #3, then tell them you are a Midwest Energy customer. Customers can also download an application at <https://centralusa.salvationarmy.org/mokan/utility-assistance/> or can send an email requesting an application to kwm.fueelfunds@usc.salvationarmy.org. Applications can also be returned via email to this email address.

To donate to the Midwest Customers Care program, call us at 1-800-222-3121 or log in to your online account. After logging in, click on the three lines in the top left

corner and find "Customers Care," fill out the form and click "Submit."

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Now is the time to schedule annual maintenance for your home's heating system. During fall months, HVAC technicians are typically less busy, making this an excellent time for maintenance and any necessary repairs before the winter months.

A qualified technician can clean filters, check for leaks and ensure all system components are working efficiently to keep your home cozy and warm when the temperatures begin to drop.



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