



# Your Natural Gas Bill Made Easy

**Updated July 2008**

***This publication is updated quarterly***

The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) developed this fact sheet to help you better understand your natural gas bill.

## Usage and meter reading

### Natural gas usage

Your natural gas usage is shown in either hundred cubic feet (Ccf) or thousand cubic feet (Mcf).

### Types of readings

Your natural gas company may read your meter or estimate how much natural gas you use each billing cycle, which can be between 25 and 35 days. An actual meter reading shows the exact amount of natural gas you have used. An estimated reading is determined by looking at the usage for the same month during past years. You can request an actual meter reading at any time.

### Fees and charges

Your bill will show two important charges: the Gas Cost Recovery (GCR) rate or the Standard Service Offer (SSO) and the base rate. The GCR rate is the actual cost of natural gas purchased by the company. This rate changes every month for Duke Energy Ohio, Columbia Gas of Ohio, Dominion East Ohio and Vectren Energy Delivery of Ohio. The base rate, which is the delivery or transportation charge, covers the costs of getting the natural gas to your home and includes all taxes and other surcharges.

You also will see a monthly service charge and usage charge. The monthly service charge stays the same each month and ranges between \$5 and \$15, depending on the company. It covers costs relating to maintaining and reading gas meters, billing and record keeping. The usage charge can go up or down depending how much or how little natural gas you use. Some companies group these two charges together.

## Required items on bills

Natural gas companies are required to list certain information on your bill. Each company must include (see sample bill on back):

- A** Gas company name, mailing address and office hours
- B** How to contact your natural gas company
- D** Billing information, including a beginning and ending meter read date and the billing cycle
- F** Whether your usage has been determined by an actual or estimated meter read
- G&H** Amount billed for current period and due date
- I** Unpaid amount due and late payment fees
- J** Payments or credits on your account
- K** Current balance for budget payments (if you are a budget billing customer)
- L** Gas Cost Recovery (GCR) rate or Standard Service Offer (SSO)
- M&N** List of each service and related charges
  - ▶ The 12-month usage history for the account
  - ▶ Explanation of codes and abbreviations on the bill
  - ▶ Customer's name, address (service and billing) and account number

## Why should you read your bill?

You should read your bill each month to know what charges appear on the bill and your normal natural gas usage. Also, the company may place important notices and other updates on the bill.

## Where can you get help?

For help, call the OCC toll free at 1-877-PICKOCC (1-877-742-5622) or visit [www.pickocc.org](http://www.pickocc.org).

*The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel is an equal opportunity employer and provider of services.*

**For additional information from the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel:**

**Call: 1-877-PICKOCC (1-877-742-5622) toll free or (614) 466-8574**  
**Write: 10 West Broad Street, Suite 1800, Columbus, Ohio 43215-3485**  
**E-mail: [occ@occ.state.oh.us](mailto:occ@occ.state.oh.us) • Internet Address: [www.pickocc.org](http://www.pickocc.org)**

## Understanding your natural gas bill

Each natural gas company has a different set up for how its bill looks. For example: one company may put your usage history as a bar graph, while another uses a table. No matter which format is used, all bills are required to have certain information listed.

Below is list of items that are required to be on each bill. The letter corresponds to the facing page where a sample bill is located. Customers who are on a budget plan or another payment arrangement could see additional information that is not on their bill. If you have questions about items that are not listed call the OCC at 1-877-PICKOCC (1-877-742-5622) or your natural gas company.

- A** Company name and address
- B** A telephone number for the customer to inquire about the bill
- C** Customer account number
- D** Beginning and ending dates, as well as the number of days within the service period
- E** Beginning meter read; ending meter read; total usage
- F** An indication whether the meter reading is estimated or actual. Companies may not always conduct an actual meter reading. Often an estimation is made based upon usage during previous years. Some companies may allow customers to phone in their own readings as well.
- G** The due date for payment of the bill in order to keep the account current
- H** The total charges for the period
- I** The amount of any late payment, if applicable
- J** Previous balances, customer credits and total balance
- K** The current balance of the budget plan amount (if the customer is participating in such a plan)
- L** The Gas Cost Recovery rate or Standard Service Offer per Mcf or Ccf
- M** The total cost of gas from the past month. This charge usually includes the total gas cost recovery in dollars and cents, a transportation cost and tax. Some companies will have these charges listed on separate lines on the bill.
- N** The monthly service or customer charge.
- O** There are a variety of ways to pay your natural gas bill. Some are free of charge, like automatic direct payments and online bill payments. Others incur convenience charges, like credit card and electronic check options or payment at authorized agent locations. Mailing a payment to your natural gas supplier is an option as well.
- P** Service summary notes give you information to help understand energy consumption and how it relates to current charges. Information on the next actual meter reading is given in these notes.
- Q** Daily comparisons show the average daily temperature and average daily gas use for the current month, previous month and the same month last year.
- R** By law, the natural gas utility must post a legal notice section with contact information of the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel and the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio and ways to contact the natural gas utility for matters of a legal nature, like bankruptcy notices and other correspondence.

# Sample Gas Bill

<b>A</b>	Gas Company Name	Name and service address					
	Company Address	CONSUMER					
	Company office hours NAME						
<b>B</b>	Mon-Fri 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.	Telephone number	123 Somewhere Street				
	Sat 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.	(614) 000-0000	Cityville, OH 47654				
	<b>RESIDENTIAL</b>	Rates & explanations as to their application are available upon request.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2"><b>Customer Account Number</b> 000000000000</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Due Date</b> Apr 22, 2003</td> <td><b>Pay This Amount</b> \$31.15</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Customer Account Number</b> 000000000000		<b>Due Date</b> Apr 22, 2003	<b>Pay This Amount</b> \$31.15
<b>Customer Account Number</b> 000000000000							
<b>Due Date</b> Apr 22, 2003	<b>Pay This Amount</b> \$31.15						
	<b>GAS USAGE (METER NO. 4904948)</b>	Account Summary					
<b>D</b>	To Mar 20 Estimated	6,694	Previous balance \$87.98				
	From Feb 21 Actual	6,673 <b>E</b>	Payments Received \$87.98CR				
	Total Used (31 days service)	21 CCF	Balance at Billing \$ .00				
	Next Reading Date: Apr. 20, 2003		Current Billing				
			\$31.15				
<b>N</b>	Customer Charge	\$6.50	Present Balance				
<b>M</b>	Gas Usage Charges	\$24.65	\$31.15				
	The bill includes \$20.18 charge for gas cost recovery at the rate of \$.96100 per CCF and tax.						
<b>L</b>	<b>MESSAGES</b>						
	Thanks for your prompt payment.						
<b>See back of bill for more information.</b>							

*Although I and K are not listed on this particular bill, additional charges and budget plan information are usually located under the Account Summary.*

**I K**

# Sample Gas Bill

**A**  
Gas Company Name  
Company Address  
Office Hours  
Contact phone number

Name and Service Address  
123 Any Street  
Any City, Any State  
00000

**B**

<b>Customer Account Number</b> 000000000000	
<b>Due Date</b> April 22, 2006	<b>Pay this amount</b> \$31.15

**C**

**Payment Options**  
E-bill  
ZipCheck  
Phone  
Mail

**O**

## Billing & Payment Summary

**Customer Name**  
John Doe

### Residential Account Summary

Previous balance	\$87.98
Payment Received	\$87.98 CR
Balance at Billing	\$00.00
Cuttent Billing	\$31.15
<b>Present Balance</b>	\$31.15

**J**

### Gas Usage (Meter No. 4904948)

To	Mar 20	Estimated	6,694
From	Feb 21	Actual	6,673

Total Used (31 days service) 21 CCF

**D**

Next Reading Date: April 20, 2006  
\$31.15

**E**

Customer Charge \$6.50  
Gas Usage Charges \$24.65  
The bill includes \$20.18 charge for gas cost recovery at the rate of \$.96100 per CCF and tax.

**F**

### Messages

Thanks for your prompt payment.

See back of bill for more informations.

**L**

### Service Summary Notes

Your next actual meter reading date is 5/22/06

**P**

Although I and K are not listed on this particular bill, additional charges and budget plan information are usually located under the Account Summary.

**I** **K**