



Delivering a bright future!

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# ENERGY CONNECTIONS

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## The dangers of osprey and baling twine

During the spring and summer, osprey are a familiar sight in our area as they fly, fish, perch and nest along our lakes, rivers and streams. This is good news. Until 1972, the common use of the pesticide DDT nearly wiped out these majestic raptors. Although their population is recovering, they face another deadly challenge – baling twine. Osprey build stick nests, many times on power poles, and line the cup-shaped interiors with finer material like grass, weeds, moss and baling twine. In examining a large nest that had blown down recently, biologists found baling twine that measured more than a quarter mile in length.

Unfortunately, osprey – especially chicks – get tangled in baling twine and may even end up dangling below the nest when they try to fly. Several times each summer, our line crews respond to calls to rescue dangling osprey or to remove them if we are too late. Several years ago, NorthWestern Energy supported a graduate student's study along the upper Missouri River and its headwaters by providing bucket trucks to band the chicks in nests. The study showed that more than 30 percent of the nests had at least one chick tangled in twine; for many, it was too late.



At NorthWestern Energy we work actively to protect osprey. Nests built in the wrong location on power poles may cause electric outages or nest fires, which may kill the eggs or chicks. To prevent this, we often install safe, alternate platforms near our lines. Crews also install nest deterrents on poles favored by osprey. While this helps protect birds from our energized lines and helps keep the lights on for our customers, it does little to keep baling twine from entangling the birds. Although we can protect osprey by installing separate platforms and deterrents, we need your help to keep baling twine out of their nests.

**As we await the migratory return of these raptors in spring, here are some things to do that will protect them:**

- Pick up all used baling twine in fields, barnyards or on fence posts.
- Store used twine in buildings, drums or garbage cans with secure lids.
- Dispose of old baling twine safely out of reach of osprey.
- Share this information with friends and neighbors.

## For your safety:

### Keep vents and meters clear of ice and snow



To keep you safe, during winter it is important that meters be kept free of snow, ice and debris. A good rule of thumb to practice is that when you shovel your driveway or sidewalk, also shovel a path to the meter and remove any snow from on top or around it.

NorthWestern Energy customers who heat their homes with natural gas or who have natural gas or other fuel burning appliances should ensure their appliance exhaust vents are clear from blowing and drifting snow

– especially after a winter storm. Blocked appliance vents could result in a loss of heat or buildup of deadly carbon monoxide in the structure.

Natural gas customers need to be extra vigilant. Clearing away snow and ice from utility equipment will help prevent a natural gas regulator from freezing over, which would interrupt the normal flow of natural gas into a home or building. Make sure that ice and snow above the meter cannot fall and hit your meter, the results could cause

a loss of heat, be expensive to repair and could even be dangerous.

For more tips and advice on winter safety, visit [NorthWesternEnergy.com](http://NorthWesternEnergy.com).

# Tips for Using Space Heaters



using your normal heating unit, consider the following: on average, it usually costs twice as much to heat the same space to the same temperature using electricity compared to natural gas, so using electric space heaters to reduce heating costs may not be the best approach.

Space heaters are a good way to supplement heating in one room, which doesn't have adequate heat or where someone needs more heat than other family members.

Standard heaters heat the air in a room while infrared units heat objects or people. Standing in front of an infrared heater can lead you to believe that it puts off more heat, but it is generally rated at the same wattage as the standard heater meaning it produces the same amount of heat. Either type of heater can be found in a range of purchase prices.

When choosing a space heater, look for units where hot surfaces are out of reach. Choose units with thermostats and auto tip-over switches that shut off automatically. For safety, always follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation and use, and keep at least three feet of clearance between the unit and combustibles such as furniture, bedding, and window treatments. Never leave a space heater unattended; turn the unit completely off in these cases.

As the heating season continues, ads and displays for electric space heaters have appeared. Prices on these units range from around \$30 up to several hundred dollars for decorative units. Several ads suggest that using space heaters may reduce your heating costs compared to whole house heating.

Small space heaters can be less expensive to use if you want to heat only one portion of your residence while keeping the rest of the home at a cooler temperature. However, if you're attempting to heat a larger area with an electric space heater rather than

## Watch where you plow!

Often times, utility equipment is located in common areas of where snow removal is happening. We encourage you to stay diligent and be sure to keep this equipment visible and clear of snow pile up. In addition, be sure to avoid meters and control panels (the large green electric boxes often located near walkways) while plowing. If you hit the equipment, be sure to report it right away. Any nick could lead to damage and we will send our crews to assess. Being diligent during snow removal can avoid unnecessary and costly repairs.



## Give the Gift of Energy



From Valentine 's Day to birthdays, graduations and more, the Gift of Energy might just be the perfect gift for someone on your list!

Visit our local Customer Service centers or contact us by phone to learn more about giving the Gift of Energy any time or season this year.

**Montana**  
(888) 467- 2669

**South Dakota and Nebraska**  
(800) 245-6977

## RUSafe Corner

When temperatures drop, children need extra attention to stay warm, safe and healthy. Young children are less likely to recognize when they are cold and more likely to lose body heat quickly due to their smaller size. One important tip to protect children when the thermometer dips is put several layers of clothing on your child and make sure their head, neck and hands are covered. Dress babies and young children in one more layer than an adult would wear. If you see a child who is consistently underdressed and not protected it is a good time to Know and Tell and contact local authorities.

## Contact us...

### MONTANA

Customer Contact Center (888) 467-2669  
7 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F  
Emergency 24/7 Service  
Call Before You Dig 811  
Energy Efficiency (800) 823-5995

### NEBRASKA

Customer Contact Center (800) 245-6977  
7 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F  
Emergency 24/7 Service  
Call Before You Dig 811

### SOUTH DAKOTA

Customer Contact Center (800) 245-6977  
7 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F  
Emergency 24/7 Service  
Call Before You Dig 811

### PAYMENT

Automated Phone  
Payment Option: (800) 218-4959  
(via checking, savings, or money market account)  
SpeedPay Automated  
Phone Payment Option: (877) 361-4927  
(via credit card account)

### CONNECT WITH US



We are required to translate important customer information for populations in our service area that meet a certain threshold. We have two languages that currently meet that threshold: Spanish and Karenic.

Nos preocupamos por su seguridad. Este anexo a su factura incluye mensajes importantes sobre seguridad que usted necesita saber con respecto al servicio público que le proporciona NorthWestern Energy. Comuníquese con nosotros si desea recibir la información de seguridad en español, llamando al teléfono 888-467-2669 (en Montana) 800-245-6977 (en South Dakota o Nebraska) y pregunte por las opciones de idiomas para los anexos de sus facturas.

ဟာဘ်ယိန်နဲ့တင်လဲ၊ နတ်ပုဒ်အင်္ဂါနဲ့လဲ၊ လင်တင်ယုကျွဲစရိတ်(လ) လာ တာထာနင်လဲ၊အဲဒါနဲ၊ ဟ်ယုဉ်းတင်ဘ်တင်ဘာတင်ကစီဉ်အရီဉ် တဖ်လဲ၊ နဲတြးသုဉ်ညါအဲလဲ၊ အဘ်ယုဉ်း NorthWestern Energy ထံမှဉ်အုတ်မနဲနင်လဲ၊ ဆဲးကျုပုဒ် နမုလ်ဉ်ဘ် တင်ဂ်တင်ကျိတဖ် လာ ပုကညီဉ် (Karenic) . ဝီဉ် တင်ကဲးလိတ်ဉ် 888-467-2669 (လာဉ်တဲါနဲ (Montana) အပု) 800-245-6977 (လာက လဲးစိး နဲဉ်တဲါ (South Dakota) မုတဖ် နဲဉ်တြးစဉ် (Nebraska)) ဝီးယုနဲလဲ၊ တင်ကထာနင်လဲ၊ ကွဲစရိတ်တင်ယုထာတဖ်အင်္ဂါနဲဉ်တက့.

