

Be Energy Safe

Consumers may want to use cheaper alternative sources to heat their homes. However, many of these can be serious safety hazards.

- Portable space heaters should be at least three feet away from anything that can burn or melt and should always be turned off when leaving the room or going to sleep.
- Wood and coal stoves, fireplaces, chimneys, chimney connectors, and all other solid-fueled heating equipment need to be checked once a year by a professional and cleaned as recommended.
- Portable kerosene heaters must be fueled only in a well-ventilated area, free of flame and other heat sources, and only when the heater has fully cooled. Make sure to follow all instructions provided by the manufacturer.
- When purchasing heating devices, look for ones that have an automatic-shutoff feature. Always follow manufacturer instructions when turning heating devices on and off.
- Be sure that any gas-fueled heating device is installed in a well-ventilated area. Never put unvented gas heaters in bathrooms or bedrooms.
- In South Carolina, portable kerosene and natural gas heaters are not legal for use in apartments or businesses.
- LP (liquefied petroleum) gas heaters with self-contained fuel supplies are not allowed for home use by NFPA codes.

For more safety tips, visit the SC Fire Marshal's web site at www.llr.state.sc.us/firemarshal

About the ORS

The ORS represents the public interest of South Carolina in utility regulation with regard to rates, charges, service standards, facilities, and practices of the major utility industries— electric, natural gas, telecommunications, water/wastewater, and transportation — before the Public Service Commission (PSC), the court system, the SC General Assembly, and federal regulatory bodies.

In fulfilling this mission, the ORS strives to balance the concerns of the using and consuming public, the financial integrity of public utilities, and economic development in South Carolina.

The ORS Can Help

If you have spoken with your electric/natural gas company and feel you still need help, the Consumer Services Division of the Office of Regulatory Staff can help by contacting the utility on your behalf for a response to ensure that the utility has followed all applicable regulations and by directing you to social services agencies that may have available funds to assist with energy costs.

Phone: 803-737-5230 (Columbia, SC)
1-800-922-1531 (toll-free in SC)
803-737-5175 TTY (Columbia, SC)
1-800-334-2217 TTY (toll-free in SC)
Fax: 803-737-4750

Web: www.regulatorystaff.sc.gov

Hours: 8:30am— 5:00pm
Monday— Friday
Messages can be left on 24-hour
Consumer Services hotline
(closed state holidays)



Winter Heating

Information for Consumers
Presented by the ORS



Be Energy Smart

Here are a few simple and low-cost actions that you can take to lower your winter heating bills.

- Have a professional check your furnace and gas appliances once a year.
- Set the thermostat between 65 and 68 degrees during cooler months.
- Close leaks around doors, windows, and openings with caulking or weather stripping.
- Insulate pipes and ducts which run through unheated areas.
- Use draperies, blinds, or shutters on windows to slow loss of heat. Open coverings on sunny days to let in the warmth.
- Avoid blocking heating vents with furniture, draperies, or carpet.
- Purchase low-cost, pre-cut, gaskets to insulate behind electrical switches and plates.
- Make sure to clean the air filters on your heating unit regularly.
- Ensure that attics, crawlspaces, and basements have the proper levels of insulation.
- Fireplaces can be major sources of heat loss. Close the flue when not in use. If you never use the fireplace, have the flue plugged.
- Be aware of drafts. If you can't seal them, make sure you sit away from them. This will help you feel warmer.
- Portable heaters are a very inefficient way to heat your house and can cause your energy bill to skyrocket.

For more tips and information, please visit the US Department of Energy at www.doe.gov or the SC Office of Regulatory Staff at www.regulatorystaff.sc.gov.

Assistance Agencies

Customers may find they need help meeting their energy needs. The agencies listed below can help you apply for energy assistance.

Aiken/Barnwell Counties Community Action Commission, Inc.

Aiken, Barnwell, & Lexington counties
803-648-6836

Beaufort/Jasper Economic Opportunity Commission, Inc.

Beaufort & Jasper counties
843-470-4508

Carolina Community Actions, Inc.

Chester, Fairfield, Lancaster, Union, & York counties
803-329-5195

Charleston Co. Human Services Commission

Charleston county
843-723-9285

Chesterfield-Marlboro Economic Opportunity Council, Inc.

Chesterfield & Marlboro counties
843-320-9760

Darlington County Community Action Agency

Darlington county
843-332-1135

GLEAMNS Human Resources Commission, Inc.

Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Newberry, & Saluda counties
864-223-8434

Lowcountry Community Action Agency, Inc.

Colleton & Hampton counties
843-549-5576

O-C-A-B Community Action Agency, Inc.
Orangeburg, Calhoun, Allendale, & Bamberg counties
803-536-1027

Pee Dee Community Action Agency
Dillon, Florence, & Marion counties
843-678-3400

Piedmont Community Actions, Inc.
Cherokee & Spartanburg counties
864-327-4546

Sunbelt Human Advancement Resources, Inc. (SHARE)
Anderson, Greenville, Oconee, & Pickens counties
864-269-0700

Waccamaw Economic Opportunity Council, Inc.
Horry, Georgetown, & Williamsburg counties
843-234-4100

Wateree Community Actions, Inc.
Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, Richland, & Sumter counties
803-775-4354

American Red Cross - Central South Carolina
803-540-1200

Call 2-1-1 any time 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to connect to vital services in your community. This services is free and multi-lingual. 2-1-1 is for finding community health and human services resources.