



Public Service Announcement

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Increasing demand for natural gas causes concern

Vernon and area residents are encouraged to reduce gas consumption

Residents and businesses in Vernon and area are asked to reduce natural gas consumption to help alleviate the current shortfall caused by the Enbridge pipeline rupture.

After the October 9 Enbridge transmission pipeline rupture, FortisBC called for all customers to reduce their natural gas use. British Columbians responded and natural gas demand quickly dropped about 20 per cent. Now, with temperatures beginning to cool, demand for natural gas is increasing once again and the need for conservation is even stronger.

“With temperatures dropping, more furnaces across the province are firing up more frequently. While we’ve made strides in improving the gas supply, given the current Enbridge delivery capacity, we simply don’t have access to enough natural gas to accommodate typical winter natural gas demand at this time,” said Roger Dall’Antonia, president and CEO of FortisBC.

Enbridge’s Westcoast T-South transmission system is an integral component of the regional natural gas infrastructure serving British Columbia. Although Enbridge completed repairs and resumed operation of the damaged line, the system is currently only operating at a substantially reduced operating pressure which translates to about 55 per cent normal capacity for the month of November. At this level, FortisBC would have difficulties meeting demand if temperatures dipped below seasonal norms for several days in a row. This would require FortisBC to access natural gas from storage far earlier in the season than normal as stored gas is typically needed for the coldest days of winter in December and January.

“We’ve been fortunate so far to have been experiencing milder weather throughout the province. This has moderated the demand for natural gas,” said Dall’Antonia, “Mid-November is historically a time when we see temperatures take a downturn and gas demand increase. With the current restricted capacity of Enbridge’s transmission system, we’re concerned about our ability to meet demand through the winter if we don’t reduce our collective draw on the system.”

To help replace lost pipeline capacity, FortisBC is actively working to make more natural gas available for British Columbians through maximizing gas flow through its Southern Crossing pipeline from Alberta, purchasing natural gas from the open market and switching its fleet of compressed natural gas (CNG) capable vehicles back to gasoline during the shortage.

FortisBC is also asking all customers refocus efforts to conserve natural gas, specifically on colder days when demand increases. Small steps such as turning down the thermostat to below 20 degrees and reducing hot water use through shorter showers and using cold water for laundry can help save natural gas. While these may seem like small savings, collectively they add up making a positive impact on the gas supply shortfall.

“At current pipeline capacity, our gas supply may be vulnerable. Any sort of extended period of colder weather could lead to loss of service for major industrial or commercial customers, or even large residential complexes,” said Dall’Antonia, “We need consistent and meaningful conservation across the province as every molecule conserved is gas that can be used to keep homes warm and businesses operating.”

For more information on how to conserve natural gas, visit fortisbc.com/reduceyouruse.

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What can you do?



Turn down the thermostat

- Where possible FortisBC is asking customers to set your thermostat between 18 – 20 °C when home and awake and no more than 17 °C when out or asleep.



Wear a sweater

- The simplest way to stay warm is to reach for a sweater instead of the thermostat. If you’re still cold, blankets and socks are a great way to insulate you against the chill.



Heat only the rooms you’re in

- Close warm air supply registers in rooms you’re not using. Avoid heating non-insulated spaces such as a garage, crawl space, attic or storage shed.



Take shorter showers

- Using less hot water will help conserve our natural gas supply. Limit daily showers to five minutes and you’ll save water and reduce your natural gas use.



Dishwasher

- Use the energy-saving mode when your dishes are less dirty.
- Run your dishwasher only when it's full.



Clothes washer/dryer

- Wash laundry in cold water.
- Always wash full loads to help save energy.
- Use lower heat settings on your natural gas dryer, such as permanent press.



Window coverings

- On sunny days, take advantage of Mother Nature by opening blinds or curtains to warm up.



Natural gas fireplace

- Natural gas fireplaces can still be used to efficiently heat the room you're in. Save energy by turning down the thermostat in the rest of the house and not heating areas that no one is using.