

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Winter Reminders from National Fuel

Erie, Pa., Jan. 15, 2019 – The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, LIHEAP, is open. Eligibility for this federally funded program is based on income guidelines and household size. For example, a family of four with a gross annual income of \$37,650 will qualify for a grant. Monies are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. For additional information, visit www.LIHEAPhelps.com or contact 1-877-443-2743.

National Fuel Customers who are having trouble paying their bills are encouraged to call Customer Service at 1-800-365-3234 to discuss available payment programs and services. Programs include:

- Budget Plan- predictable monthly gas bills and stabilized heating payments for the year
- Deferred Payment Agreement- customers can negotiate a payment plan in the event of a special circumstance.
- LIRA- reduced-rate monthly bills and debt forgiveness
- LIURP- weatherization assistance for customers who meet income and consumption requirements
- CARES- payment arrangements and assistance referrals for customers facing hardships
- Neighbor For Neighbor Heat Fund- helps customers who are having difficulty paying bills and who meet one of the following criteria: at least 55 years old, a veteran, disabled, have a certified medical condition, or receiving unemployment benefits, meet basic energy needs

National Fuel advises homeowners to be vigilant and pay attention to outdoor gas meters, furnaces and vents throughout the winter season. Snow, ice and extreme cold temperatures can pose a variety of safety and performance issues for heating systems. Ensure outdoor gas meter safety and proper service by:

- Keeping the gas meter, and area around the meter, free of snow
- Clearing paths to the meter
- Informing those working, shoveling, plowing or snow blowing around a meter of its location
- Calling National Fuel, 1-800-365-3234, if a meter becomes encased in ice (do not attempt to break or melt the ice)
- Exercising caution when removing icicles from a meter or any area of the roof above the meter
- Not letting children play or climb on the meter

Natural gas furnace exhaust vents can become easily clogged by debris, ice or snow, causing the furnace to shut off or operate inefficiently. Blocked vents also can lead to a buildup of carbon monoxide (CO) gas inside a residence. CO is a colorless, odorless and dangerous gas produced when fuel is burned without enough air for complete combustion. When inhaled, CO can cause unconsciousness, brain damage and death. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include: fatigue, coughing, headache, irregular breathing, dizziness, overall paleness, nausea and cherry red lips and/or ears. Those experiencing symptoms of CO poisoning should immediately open windows and doors, move outside and call 911. Avoid a CO emergency by:

- Having a qualified professional inspect and test chimney, appliances and heating equipment annually
- Install at least one CO detector in your home
- Never use a gas oven or stovetop for heating your home
- Never run a gasoline engine (such as a gasoline generator) or an automobile in an enclosed space
- Never use a portable charcoal or propane grill indoors

As always, if you **smell gas, leave fast!** If a rotten-egg natural gas odor is present, leave the premises immediately and call National Fuel's emergency line, 1-800-444-3130, from a different location. If you smell gas outdoors, call National Fuel's emergency number and provide the address nearest to the site of the odor. To learn more about natural gas safety, visit www.nationalfuelgas.com/forhome/gassafety.aspx.

National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation is the Utility segment of National Fuel Gas Company, a diversified energy company that is engaged in a number of natural gas related activities. The Utility provides natural gas service to more than 740,000 customers in Western New York and Northwestern Pennsylvania. For more information, visit www.nationalfuelgas.com.

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