

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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**SNOW CAN PRESENT HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS FOR NIPSCO EMPLOYEES**

**MERRILLVILLE, Ind.** – While most of the snow has been cleared from the roads following this week’s severe winter storm, large accumulations of snow still remain in the backyards and sideyards of many residences. These conditions create hazardous situations for Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) meter readers and other employees working in the field, and may require NIPSCO to estimate energy usage this month in some cases.

NIPSCO is asking customers to clear snow and ice away from gas and electric meters, and to make certain any gates or fences leading to yards are not frozen shut.

At the same time, NIPSCO is also reminding customers to keep vents for water heaters, furnaces and clothes dryers clear of any snow and ice so they can operate safely and efficiently.

“We want our customers and employees to be safe,” said Keith Wooldridge, senior vice president of field operations. “Our goal is to read every meter each month, but these weather conditions will make this task more challenging, and any assistance we can get from our customers is greatly appreciated.”

Every month, a team of more than 150 NIPSCO meter readers read more than one million meters. Occasionally, unusual circumstances, such as severe weather, bad road conditions, locked gates and unfriendly dogs, prevent NIPSCO from reading a meter.

**How to Avoid an Estimated Bill**

In cases like these, it becomes necessary for NIPSCO to provide customers with an estimated reading for the amount of energy used.

In the event that estimates are provided, NIPSCO strives to get as close as possible to the likely amount of energy used, based on consumption habits. When the meter is next read, bills will be adjusted accordingly.

If customers don’t prefer to wait until their bill is adjusted, they can simply enter an actual reading over the automated phone system or conveniently through NIPSCO.com. A revised bill will be issued right away with the new amount owed.

Below are a few reminders to help keep employees safe and ensure a timely and accurate reading:

- Keep the area around your meter free and clear of clutter.
- Brush snow and ice from your utility meter at the same time that you clear your walk and driveway, but don’t damage the equipment or connections in an attempt to break up heavy ice or snow.
- Please keep dogs and animals secured and away from meter readers and NIPSCO service areas. The dates for scheduled meter reads are noted on your NIPSCO bill.
- Make sure that the path leading to your meter is safe and properly lit — especially stairs.

By helping NIPSCO to provide safe and easy access to meters, customers benefit by receiving an actual meter read rather than an estimated read.

*NIPSCO, with headquarters in Merrillville, Ind., is one of the nine energy distribution companies of NiSource Inc. (NYSE: NI). With more than 712,000 natural gas customers and 457,000 electric customers across the northern third of Indiana, NIPSCO is the largest natural gas distribution company, and the second largest electric distribution company, in the state. NiSource distribution companies serve 3.8 million natural gas and electric customers primarily in seven states. More information about NIPSCO is available at [www.nipSCO.com](http://www.nipSCO.com).*