

# HOUSE CALLS

## ENERGY SOURCE

from D.F. Richard Energy



### PERSONALLY SPEAKING

## You can always count on us

Dear Friends,

### According to the Old Farmer's Almanac,

we're in for a warmer, wetter winter, but you and I both know that there's only one sure thing about New England weather: We have to expect the unexpected! That's why our staff is prepared to take care of all your heating needs this winter, no matter what the season brings.



make winter easier and hassle free, whether you are staying here for the season or closing up your home and residing elsewhere.

I would also like to extend congratulations to the winners of our recent customer-service drawing. Thank you for participating!

We chose three winners at random and awarded a **\$50 Visa gift card** to: **Christine Baird, Elaine Malo and Lynn Conway!**

Remember, as we enter the season that tests our resolve as New Englanders, don't worry. We've got this!

Wishing you the best,

Bob Richard

Your safety and comfort come first. We invest in state-of-the-art equipment and training to make sure our experienced team of professionals is there when you need us, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

We're always looking for ways to help you save money and stay comfortable. This newsletter is devoted to helping you get ready for winter. We've put together some simple steps you can take and some tips to

## Winter prep

**A few easy preparations** now can pave the way for a safe and comfortable winter.

- ✓ **Reduce breakdowns and safety problems.** Be sure to schedule a tune-up for your oil heating system and a gas check for propane equipment and appliances.
- ✓ **Change your furnace's air filter regularly,** especially if you have pets.
- ✓ **Vacuum baseboard heating elements** to remove dust and pet hair buildup, which can reduce efficiency.
- ✓ **Clear debris** to ensure easy, safe access to your fill pipe, propane tank or oil tank.
- ✓ **Flag your underground tank dome** so that it's easy to spot.
- ✓ **Replace batteries** in smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.

## Help us deliver safely and promptly!

### When clearing your driveway after snow,

keep in mind that our trucks need a 9- to 10-foot-wide path in order to maneuver safely. Regulations prevent us from delivering fuel if your driveway isn't plowed. (If you need help clearing snow, give us a call, and together we will come up with a solution.)

If possible, please also clear a 12-inch path to your outside tank after a snowfall, and

remove any icicles that are hanging over the tank so that they do not fall and break equipment.

Finally, keep your heating system's power venter cleared of snow. A blocked power venter can cause service issues.

Following these recommendations will assist our drivers in making safe deliveries and get fuel to everyone as soon as possible.



# Comfort and Savings: Finding Your Balance

This is the time of year when you want to make wise choices to stay comfortable while you keep your energy costs under control. Here are some tips to help you.



## 5 Propane Upgrades to Consider

Balance out your comfort and savings throughout the year with these five suggestions for propane upgrades.

### 1. Install a propane fireplace or propane log set.

Vented propane hearths give you all the benefits of wood fireplaces without the smoke, mess or clean up — and at a fraction of the installation cost — no chimney required!

### 2. Warm up to a propane space heater.

Do you have rooms that are drafty and cold? Do you do a lot of work in your garage? Vented propane gas space heaters are easy to install, incredibly efficient and extremely safe. They also burn cleaner, with fewer emissions compared to electric space heaters.

### 3. Upgrade to a new propane furnace.

Propane gas furnaces are best in their class in terms of efficiency, with ratings from 90 to 98% efficient. A propane furnace can provide affordable warmth and comfort for any size floor plan, from small residences to large custom homes.

### 4. Go tankless.

Swap out your old electric tank water heater for an innovative tankless propane unit. You'll cut down on your water heating bills and enjoy a virtually endless supply of hot water.

### 5. Swap out your electric stove for a propane range/cooktop.

Precision temperature control is just one of the reasons that 9 out of 10 professional chefs choose to cook with gas. Why not discover all the other benefits of a propane cooktop for yourself?

Propane — the more appliances you have, the more you'll love it! For more propane upgrade ideas, please contact us and we'll be glad to share our expert advice with you!

## Raising Smart to a Higher Degree

A smart thermostat is a great addition for your home. A Wi-Fi enabled thermostat allows you to view and change temperature settings, check local weather conditions and more, all from your **smartphone, computer or tablet**.

Once the smart thermostat gets installed, you register it online. This enables access from any location. If you're away from home, you can use your phone or tablet to adjust the temperature setting so your home is at the perfect temperature when you return.

Some thermostat models even allow you to adjust temperatures to your comfort and over the next few days your thermostat will "remember" the temperatures you like and build a schedule based on your patterns. **Now, that's pretty smart** — and it saves you on both heating and cooling costs!

## PUT YOUR COMFORT ON AUTOMATIC

*Many of our oil and propane customers* get scheduled deliveries. They never have to call us for fuel because we carefully track their fuel usage and then make a delivery before their tank gets low. Automatic delivery does not cost anything extra!

This system works for most customers if usage is consistent, but there are exceptions, especially for our propane customers who use appliances at their discretion, such as fireplaces, space heaters and pool heaters.

In cases like this, we ask that you call us for a delivery when your propane tank gauge reaches 30%. This will give us plenty of time to get more fuel to you.

If you're a heating oil customer who prefers to call in your order, you should do so when your tank reaches the ¼ mark.

**Important:** If you find you're using a lot more or less fuel than you did last year, please call and let us know. We will be happy to adjust your delivery schedule.



## Safety Corner

Here are a few tips on how to keep everything running safely and efficiently in your home.

- **Keep the area around your heating equipment** as clean and clutter free as possible. Never store anything flammable near your boiler, furnace or any other appliance.
- **Change or clean the filter** in your oil or propane furnace on a regular basis during the heating season. Dust and dirt are the natural enemies of your furnace; a dirty filter compromises efficiency and can even result in a shutdown.
- Whether you heat your home with oil or propane, install **carbon monoxide (CO) detectors** in your home. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions about location and maintenance.
- **After a severe storm, carefully** check your property for downed power lines, damaged gas lines or damage to your fuel storage tank. Contact us to report any damage.



# Propane safety tips

**Propane is safe when used correctly.** Follow these safety tips from the Propane Education & Research Council to ensure that your propane equipment is operating properly:

- **Look for a blue flame.** If you see yellow flames or notice significant soot on equipment, the gas is not burning completely. This could create carbon monoxide, an odorless and deadly gas.
- **Keep vents clear.** Be sure they are not blocked by snow and ice, or animal or insect nests.
- **Be aware of gas connectors.** Only a trained professional should move propane appliances. Older connectors can crack and cause a leak if twisted.
- **Schedule a gas check.** A technician will inspect your gas appliance systems to ensure that they are operating efficiently and correctly.



Please visit [DFRichard.com](http://DFRichard.com) to read more propane safety tips.

D.F. RICHARD



**Call us!**  
**(603) 742-2020**  
**(800) 649-6457**

**Visit us!**  
**DFRichard.com**

**Email us!**  
**CustomerService@DFRichard.com**



## Community Corner: Cocheco Valley Humane Society

**As a family-run business,** we have deep roots in the community. We are committed to giving back to our neighbors, without whom we couldn't have flourished since 1932. We contribute in a lot of ways—through our day-to-day operations or with financial sponsorships—because we believe it's all about being there for others.

As an example, we are very proud to be a supporter of the **Cocheco Valley Humane Society**. This organization provides temporary shelter for neglected, abandoned, abused or unwanted animals in our area, and places them in caring homes.

We encourage you to support them too, either through donations, by volunteering, or by attending one of their fun events. Visit [CVHOnline.org](http://CVHOnline.org) to learn more.

D.F. RICHARD



P.O. Box 669, Dover, NH 03821-0669

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## If you're leaving home...

**If you spend time away** from home in the winter, or if you use your residence as a rental property, it's important to monitor your heating system. Sporadic fuel use makes it impossible for us to gauge when our automatic delivery customers will need a delivery.

If you run out of fuel, or your equipment shuts down, there's a big risk that your pipes will freeze—resulting in extensive damage to your home and your heating system. Heating equipment can malfunction and electricity can shut off for any number of reasons, especially with our New England winter conditions.

Arrange to have someone you trust check on your property daily.

We also recommend installing a wireless smart thermostat that can be set up to send you an alert if the temperature in your home falls below 60°.

Make sure we know who to contact if we need to make a delivery or a repair while you're away.



**In this issue: Winter safety tips • Did you get your gas check or tune-up?**