

PREPARE FOR WINTER WITH ENERGY SAVING TIPS

Now is the best time to start thinking about ways to save on your energy bill. To keep warm and cut down your energy use, try these helpful energy-saving tips around your house all winter. With very little effort and with very few dollars you can conserve on your winter energy use which saves dollars on your utility bill. You will be surprised to see how much you can reduce your energy consumption, and cost, by following a few simple tips:

- **Heat pumps are the most efficient form of electric heating in moderate climates.** You can just "set it and forget it."
- **Keep the thermostat on your heating system at the lowest comfortable setting.** Set your thermostat to 68 degrees or lower. On the average, you add five percent to the operating time of your heating system for every degree it's set above 68.
- **If you have a furnace, install a programmable thermostat.** Set thermostat to turn the heat down at night and when you're away.
- **Wrap water pipes.** This will reduce heat loss from your hot water lines and help to prevent your pipes from freezing. The best type of wrap to use is "foam pipe wrap". You can find this pipe wrap at hardware stores for an inexpensive price.
- **Caulk or re-caulk around windows and doors.** This helps keep the cold out and the heat in. If your caulking is cracked, remove it and reseal with new caulk.
- **Change your air filters.** This should be done every month or so to help your unit's air exchange and indoor air quality. Dirty filters can increase your system's operating costs, damage equipment and reduce efficiency.
- **Have your heating or cooling system professionally checked to make sure it is running properly.** This can prolong the life of your system, as well as reduce operating costs.
- **Insulate your electric water heater with at least R-6 insulation.** Read your water heater manufacturer's warranty to make sure its not voided by adding a water heater jacket. Do not cover the pressure release valve when you wrap the water heater.
- **Check weather stripping around doors, windows and between heated and unheated areas of your home – such as garages, basements, attics, etc.** A good way to check to see if stripping needs changing is: close your door; if you see light coming through, the stripping needs changing.
- **If you are going away for several days, lower the thermostat to 60 degrees, but not to "off."** By setting the thermostat at 60, there will be less strain on your heating system when you return and it's time to reheat the house. Also, having some heat in the house will prevent damage, such as frozen or broke water pipes, from outside freezing temperatures.

- **Keep heating vents and registers clear.** Make sure they are not blocked by draperies or furniture. The vents should also be cleaned regularly with a vacuum or broom.
- **Let the sun shine in.** On sunny days, open drapes or blinds to allow natural solar heat to warm the house. Keep drapes and blinds closed on cloudy days and at night. Use insulated or heavy curtains on windows facing the north side of the house.
- **Make sure fireplace dampers fit tightly, and keep them closed when not using the fireplace.** Add a glass fireplace screen, if possible.
- **Cover bare floors.** Carpeting adds to comfort and heat retention, especially if there is little or no floor insulation.
- **Use a humidifier to keep your home more comfortable.** Adding moisture allows you to reduce the thermostat setting without feeling colder.
- **Reverse the direction of your ceiling fans to help maintain a comfortable temperature in your home.** Check the switch located on your ceiling fan or refer to your owner's manual for the proper direction of rotation.
- **If you have a window air conditioning unit, remove it for the winter months to prevent heat from escaping through and around the unit.** If it can't be moved, put a cover over it to prevent drafts.
- **Check the R-value of insulation in your home.** R-value is a measure of resistance to heat flow. For existing homes, it is recommended that R-30 be used in the ceiling, R-13 be used in the walls and R-11 be used in the floor for maximum comfort and energy efficiency.
- **Use the Home Energy Conservation Calculator.** The City of Concord has a link (above) to an energy conservation calculating tool (Energy Depot, hosted by Enercom, Inc.) that may be a valuable resource to Concord utility customers. Information presented is based on user input as well as accepted engineering calculations or assumptions.
- **Review your home electric information.** The City of Concord also has a link to view your electric usage information, pay your utility bill, or report a problem. This link is on this web site, above, named e-Care.