



Save Energy Keeping Your Winter Warm

BEST PRACTICE AREA: ENERGY EFFICIENCY

DID YOU KNOW?

Installing insulation is generally the best single step to take to reduce energy waste. Without adequate attic insulation, up to 20% of every dollar spent on home heating goes right through the roof.

Myth: When I turn down my thermostat at night, it takes more energy to reheat the house in the morning when I turn the thermostat back up.

Fact: No matter how long you will be gone or asleep, you will save energy by turning down the thermostat. Heat escapes faster when there is a bigger difference between indoor and outdoor temperatures. When you turn down the thermostat, the indoor temperature is closer to the outdoor temperature, the furnace runs less and you lose less heat and save energy. In the morning, the furnace will run a little longer to bring the house back to temperature; however, the nighttime energy savings is much greater than the energy needed to re-heat the home.

Myth: The higher the thermostat is set, the faster the furnace will heat the house.

Fact: Most furnaces deliver heat at the same rate, no matter how high the thermostat is set. Just set the thermostat to the temperature you'd like, and your furnace will heat your home as fast as it can.

If you're like most Minnesotans, the cost of heating is a large portion of your wintertime utility budget. Whether you are a homeowner or renter, it is important we all make an effort to cut down in the amount of energy we use. Fortunately, surprising money savings can be achieved through basic energy efficiency measures, many with little or no cost. Other energy improvements may require larger investment, but typically pay for themselves in the form of energy savings within a few years—then it's money in your pocket.

DON'T OVERHEAT YOUR HOME

- Turn down the thermostat— for every degree you lower the thermostat you will save up to 5 percent on heating costs.
- Let the sunshine in— open window shades during the day to let in free heat from sun. Close all shades at night to reduce heat loss.
- Wear warmer clothes— or put extra blankets on the bed before turning the heat up.
- Install a programmable thermostat— it is a convenience that saves you money.

USE HOT WATER WISELY

- Wash in cold— and instead of running dishes under hot water, plug the sink and use cold water.
- Limit your shower time— to 4 minutes to save money and energy.
- Lower the thermostat on your water heater to 120-125 degrees.
- Wrap Up your water heater in an insulation blanket to help retain the heat of the water.

READY TO INVEST OR REPLACE

- Tune-up the heating system— it can increase a furnace's heating efficiency and reduce heating cost.
- Caulk and seal before insulating— before adding more insulation and installing new insulation in home, first seal all holes where air might leak.
- Insulate the attic and floors.
- Replace your furnace if it is over 15 years old— replace it before it breaks. Shop around and get bids from several licensed contractors.
- Purchase the most energy efficient heating system you can afford—Energy Star labeled heating systems will be at least 20 percent more efficient than old furnaces.

CHECK YOUR DUCKS FOR QUACKS... Check your air ducts for gaps at the joints. Gaps in the ductwork can allow warm air to escape and not reach its intended destination. Seal off all gaps in the ductwork with sealant or duct tape to minimize heat loss to unintended areas of your home.

HELP YOUR HOME HOLD ITS HEAT

- Don't block the flow— move furniture and other objects away from heating registers.
- Close the door— don't heat areas in your home which you don't regularly use.
- Reduce air leakage— a quick dollar-saving task is to caulk, seal and weather-strip all seams, cracks and openings to the outside.
- Change the furnace filter more often— to help run the furnace more efficiently, keep air cleaner, and prolong the life of the heating and cooling system.
- Seal off the fireplace when not using it.

NOT USING IT? SWITCH IT OFF!

- Switch off at wall— appliances such as televisions, microwaves, phone chargers and computers continue to use electricity even if you have turned them off or not using. Turn off at power point every time you finish using them.

