

Tips for saving energy and money this winter

As temperatures drop and energy bills start to soar, more and more Wisconsin homeowners are looking for ways to control costs this winter. Energy efficiency is an important part of the solution.

The following tips can help you save natural gas, electricity, and money at home while maintaining your comfort and protecting the environment.

1. Use a programmable thermostat.

Inexpensive and easy to install, programmable thermostats automatically turn down the heat while you are asleep or away, saving you as much as \$100 per year. You can reduce your heating bill by one percent for each degree up to five degrees the temperature is set back over an eight hour period.

2. Close storm windows.

Make sure storm windows are closed completely so no air leaks in or out.

3. Maintain or replace your heating system.

Just like a car, your furnace or boiler needs periodic maintenance to keep it running efficiently. Schedule yearly maintenance with a qualified contractor and replace furnace filters monthly or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Make sure all supply and return registers are clear of obstructions.

Focus on Energy recommends that you run your fan on "auto" for both heating and cooling seasons. Depending on the type of furnace you have, it could cost an extra \$80 to \$380 to run the fan continuously.

Before purchasing a new furnace, be sure to discuss your heating needs with a consultant or qualified contractor partnering with Home Performance with ENERGY STAR®. You'll get expert advice to help you



choose the right system for your home—saving energy and money and increasing your family's comfort.

4. Change to energy efficient lighting.

Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) use 75 percent less energy than standard light bulbs and last up to 10 times longer. By changing the five most-used incandescent bulbs in your home to ENERGY STAR qualified CFLs, you can save about \$35 each year.

5. Close the chimney damper.

For homes with fireplaces, it's important to close the damper when not in use. This prevents cold air from entering the house through the chimney. If you never use the fireplace, you may wish to have a contractor plug and seal the flue to reduce heat loss through the opening in the roof.

6. Seal air leaks.

Hidden air leaks from cracks, gaps, and holes in the building envelope let warm air out of your home and often add up to the equivalent of an open window. Sealing these leaks helps you maintain a comfortable temperature throughout your home and control your heating costs. To maximize savings and comfort, it's important to air seal before you insulate.

A Home Performance evaluation can help you find the best places to air seal.

For more information,
call 800.762.7077 or visit focusonenergy.com.

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7. Add insulation.

Insulation is designed to resist heat flow—that is, if it's cold outside, insulation helps keep heat inside the house. In winter, a lack of insulation makes walls cold and forces the furnace to work harder. One of the easiest and most beneficial places to add insulation is in the attic; however, it is important to first determine how much and what kind of insulation you already have. Consultants and qualified contractors that partner with the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program are trained to help you determine your insulation needs.

8. Conserve hot water.

Lower the thermostat of your water heater to no more than 120°F. With every 10°F reduction in water temperature, you can save three percent to five percent in water-heating costs. Water-saving showerheads and faucet aerators can reduce your hot water use by 50 percent. A family of four can save 12,000 gallons of water a year, as well as the energy required to heat it. Wash only full loads of dishes and clothes, and wash clothes in cold water using cold-water detergents whenever possible. If available, use energy-saving features such as the partial-load setting and no-heat drying cycles.

9. Change the direction of your ceiling fan.

Ceiling fans aren't just for cooling. Most models have a button on the base that changes the direction of the blades. In winter, set the blades to rotate clockwise and produce a gentle updraft, which moves warm air from the ceiling and distributes it evenly throughout the room.

10. Deck the halls with LED holiday lights.

Light-emitting diode (LED) holiday lights are a hot holiday item for many reasons: They use up to 90 percent less electricity than standard bulbs, last up to 10 times longer, produce almost no heat, and are nearly impossible to break. Because they use less energy, they're also better for the environment.

11. Choose ENERGY STAR qualified appliances and electronics.

Look for the ENERGY STAR when replacing appliances and electronics devices, from clothes washers, refrigerators and water heaters, to televisions, stereos, and DVD players. ENERGY STAR qualified equipment uses up to 60 percent less energy than standard models, saving you money and reducing pollution from power plants.

12. Unplug household appliances and electronics when not in use.

Devices such as TVs, DVD players, game consoles, stereos, microwaves, and coffee makers use energy even when turned off to power features such as clock displays and remote controls. Unplug these devices when not in use to save energy. For convenience, plug multiple devices into a power strip and turn the strip off when they're not in use.

13. Schedule a Home Performance energy evaluation.

A Home Performance with ENERGY STAR evaluation can help you find hidden problems in your home, such as drafts and moisture. The evaluation includes a comprehensive inspection of all of your home's systems. Following the evaluation, you will receive a report identifying the problems and recommending solutions.

Qualifying income-eligible residents can improve their homes through the Targeted Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program, which offers limited-income homeowners a no-cost energy evaluation and covers 90 percent of the improvement costs.

TAKE ACTION TODAY. SEE RESULTS TOMORROW.

Reduce energy costs and improve the comfort, safety, and durability of your home. Call Focus on Energy at **800.762.7077** or visit **focusonenergy.com**.

STAY CURRENT AND CONNECTED!

Join our online conversation at **focusonenergy.com/socialnetworks** to connect with people who share your interest in saving energy and money at home and work.

Focus on Energy works with eligible Wisconsin residents and businesses to install cost-effective energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Focus information, resources, and financial incentives help to implement projects that otherwise would not be completed, or to complete projects sooner than scheduled. Its efforts help Wisconsin residents and businesses manage rising energy costs, promote in-state economic development, protect our environment, and control the state's growing demand for electricity and natural gas. For more information, call **800.762.7077** or visit **focusonenergy.com**.



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