

"Winterizing" Your Home

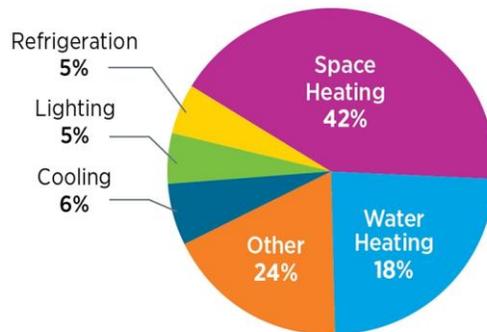


Save Energy, Save Money, Save the Planet

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Issue

The average family in the U.S. spends roughly \$2000 on utility bills annually, and nearly half of that amount goes to heating and cooling the home. With temperatures dipping to dangerously low levels in many parts of the country, this is prime time to make sure that your home is ready for the season.



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, AEO2014 Early Release Overview.

Solutions for Each Area of the House

• Attics and Floors

- Keep access to your attic and other unheated/uncooled areas of your home closed, weather-stripped, and insulated.
- Consider a whole-house fan for your attic to pull cool air from the house and exhaust warm air from the attic.
- Ensure that you have 12 to 15 inches of attic insulation.
- Make sure that attic and crawl space areas are properly ventilated.
- Insulate floors above unheated crawl spaces or basements, and seal ductwork that runs through them with specially designed duct tape or mastic.



• Doors and Windows

- Upgrade to more efficient windows and doors, such as those with double panes, low conductivity gas-fill between panes, and wood, vinyl, or fiberglass frames.
- Install weather-stripping and sweeps on any exterior doors (including garage doors), and caulk around windows and doors to stop air leaks.
- Install tight-fitting, insulating drapes or shades on windows. Close window coverings at night to keep out the cold and open them during the day to let in the sunshine.
- Use a heavy-duty, clear plastic sheet on a frame or tape clear plastic film to the inside of your window frames. Make sure the plastic is sealed tightly to the frame to reduce infiltration.



• Fireplaces & Wood Stoves

- Never burn garbage, cardboard, ocean driftwood or wet wood, and avoid using fireplaces during extremely cold weather.
- Install glass doors and keep the fireplace damper closed unless you have a fire burning.
- Insulate your chimney with liners.



• Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) System

- Replace your furnace filter once a month or as needed.
- Tune up your HVAC equipment annually.
- If your HVAC equipment is more than 10 years old or not keeping your house comfortable, have it evaluated by a professional HVAC contractor.
- Install a programmable thermostat, and set it to 68°F or lower during the day and 65°F at night. Make sure it's specifically designed for use with heat pumps if you have one.
- For each degree you lower your thermostat below 73°F during the heating season, you will save from 2-4% on heating costs. Programming the thermostat to turn the temperature down 8 degrees



for 7 hours each night and an additional 7 hours each weekday could result in a seasonal heating savings of approximately 12 percent.

- Adjust individual registers throughout your home to the same temperature to improve flow of heated or cooled air, and clean them regularly by vacuuming and/or dusting.
- Keep heat-producing appliances (like television sets and lamps) away from your thermostat.
- Keep the outdoor unit (heat pump or air conditioner) clear of obstructions, including snow.
- Consider installing a humidifier and keep the humidity level between 35-40%. This will help you feel warmer at lower temperature settings.

- **Lighting and Electrical**

- Use ENERGY STAR certified lighting for bulbs that use 75 percent less energy than a standard incandescent and last 10 times longer for the longer nights ahead.
- Install insulation on sunroofs to allow natural light in during the day while maintaining interior temperatures.
- Install draft protectors on the electrical outlets and install switch plates on outside walls to further improve insulation.



- **Water Systems**

- Lower the temperature on your water heater to about 120°F.
- Conserve hot water by taking shorter showers, using only warm or cold water in your washing machine, and running your dishwasher only with full loads.
- Installing water-efficient fixtures and appliances, which can save approximately \$170 per year.



To Learn More

- Visit Baltimore Gas & Electric's Smart Energy Savers Program website to schedule a Quick Home Energy Checkup and learn more about improving your home's heating efficiency: <http://www.bgesmartenergy.com/>
- Visit the Department of Energy's EnergySaver website for more tips that will help you and your family save money by saving energy: www.energysaver.gov
- Visit the EPA's WaterSense website to find the most water-efficient fixtures and appliances: <http://www.epa.gov/watersense>

Sources

- Department Of Energy - Home Energy Use Tips: <http://www.energy.gov/energysaver/articles/tips-your-homes-energy-use>
- Baltimore Gas & Electric - Ways to Save: <http://www.bge.com/waystosave/>
- Environmental Protection Agency - Winter: <http://www2.epa.gov/what-you-can-do/winter>