

13 Cold-Weather Energy Saving Tips

From Traverse City Light & Power, Your Energy Star Partners

1. For the biggest energy savings this winter, start wearing layers of warmer clothing and turn your thermostats down to 68 degrees or below. Reduce your settings to 55 degrees before going to sleep or when away for the day. Install programmable thermostats to efficiently achieve this daily task if you don't have them today.
2. Use sunlight wisely. Leave shades and blinds open during sunny, cold days, but close them at night to reduce the amount of heat lost through windows.
3. Caulk and weather-strip. Don't just seal doors and windows. Look for other air leaks that you can seal, such as around plumbing penetrations, air ducts or ceiling-mounted lighting fixtures.
4. If you don't have the latest insulated windowpanes, make temporary double-pane windows by using plastic sheeting over your regular windows. This reduces the amount of energy lost through your windows.
5. Insulate your hot water heater and hot water pipes. Follow the manufacturer's instructions or get professional help.
6. Replace or clean your furnace filters monthly. This could save up to 5% on your heating bill.
7. If you have an old heating furnace, consider replacing it with a new energy-efficient furnace to save money over the long term. Look for the Energy Star[®] because it signifies superior energy saving devices.
8. Check the insulation of your house: The majority of homes built before 1980 are under-insulated. In such homes, heat can escape through the ceiling, past the roof and into the atmosphere. As a general rule, if you have less than 11 to 12 inches of attic insulation, you probably need more.
9. Ventilating fans in the bathroom and kitchen can pull out a houseful of warmed air in just one hour. Turn fans off as soon as they have done the job.
10. Turn off the lights when you don't need them. Although you may have heard this tip repeated over and over again, it actually saves more energy than most of the others!
11. Use the smallest oven or burner when cooking, or a crock pot, or use the smallest pan possible.
12. Defrost foods in the refrigerator before cooking.
13. Don't peek into the oven as you are cooking. The more you open the oven door, the more heat escapes and your appliance uses more energy to maintain the cooking temperature.