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Governor

**STAY WARM**

## 25 Tips to Stay Warm and Safe This Winter

Invest a little time and save your energy dollars. A little bit here and there adds up!

### Windows

- Latch your windows to help keep out drafts, and buy thumb locks at your local hardware store for the windows that don't have them. Clean out the bugs and other things that collect in the tracks, around the seals, and windowsills. This will allow the windows to close more tightly.
- Consider putting up plastic sheeting to insulate your windows. It is relatively inexpensive, will let in less cold air, and will save you money very quickly (hair dryer needed).
- Window coverings or draperies will make a difference blocking some of the heat that escapes, especially at night. The heavier the curtain or shade, and the more tightly it fits to the window, the more effective it will be.

### Exterior Doors

- Make sure your doors and storm doors fit and close properly. Latch them for both safety and additional air sealing
- Purchase or make door sweeps to block the air from coming in under the door. These are inexpensive and easy to install.
- Consider using temporary caulking, called rope caulk, that can be peeled off in spring for basement or porch doors that are not used during the winter.

### Electronics

- Turn off lights and small appliances like microwaves and toaster ovens when you are finished using them to completely stop the flow of electricity. A power strip may make this easier.
- Computers, televisions, and stereo equipment use a lot of energy, even when they don't seem to be "on." This so-called "phantom load" can account for as much 10% of your electricity bill.
- Compact fluorescent light bulbs are available in many shapes, sizes, wattages, and colors. Install them in the light fixtures you use most often and for the longest period of time. Avoid using them in humid or cold spaces, as they will have shorter life spans.

### Kitchen

- Keep the temperature in your refrigerator around 39\* F and your freezer around 0°F.
- Clean the coils behind or under your refrigerator a couple of times a year. This will keep the motor from working too hard and using more electricity than necessary. It will also prolong the life of the appliance. Make sure to unplug the appliance, then ask a partner to help you move it. Use a vacuum and a long-handled bottle brush to clean out food bits and other things that builds up under and behind the fridge.

- ENERGY STAR® labeled products can cut your energy bills by up to 30 percent. Find retailers near you at <http://www.energystar.gov/> when you're ready to replace your appliances, as well as heating and cooling systems, lighting, windows, office equipment, and home electronics.
- Your refrigerator or freezer should run no more than 15-20 minutes an hour, any longer than that and it is using more energy than it should. To cut down the time it is running, keep your fridge and freezer full, even if it is just with water bottles. When you open the door to an empty refrigerator or freezer, all of that cold air comes out of it, but there is less airflow if the space is taken up with food or other mass.
- If you use the dishwasher, make sure to fill it completely before running it for maximum efficiency. Scrape the food scraps off your dishes before putting them in the dishwasher, but let the appliance do the rinsing. Using the "heat dry" setting is like using a hair dryer - it uses lots of energy and isn't necessary. The hot water coming into the dishwasher should be hot enough to clean the dishes without additional heat.

### Laundry

- Today's detergents work well in cold water to disinfect your clothes, eliminating the need for hot water.
- The clothes dryer is typically the biggest energy hog in your house, bigger than your electric stove, fridge, dishwasher, even the electric hot water heater. Use it sparingly and you'll save a lot of energy. Run a laundry line in your basement to hang your clothes in winter, or dry your clothes on racks. Even hanging out 1-2 loads a week will make a difference.
- Clean out the lint after each use, and clean the vent-duct every year for both safety and energy savings. Keep the dryer door closed to prevent cold air from getting into the house through the vent.

### Hot water:

- Lower the thermostat on your water heater. A setting of 120°F provides comfortable hot water for most uses.
- By spending less than \$25 on a water-heater jacket for your electric water heater, you can save up to 10% on your water heating costs. When you insulate your electric hot-water storage tank, be careful not to cover the thermostat. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations. Don't try to install a wrap on your gas or oil fired tank. Leave that to a professional.
- Select a showerhead with a flow rate of less than 2.5 gpm (gallons per minute) for maximum water efficiency. Before 1992, some showerheads had flow rates of 5.5 gpm, so you might want to replace them if you're not sure of their flow rates.
- Take more showers than baths. Bathing uses the most hot water in the average household.

### Heating System:

- Install a programmable thermostat that can be adjusted to the temperature according to your schedule. Turning the thermostat down just 5 degrees at night (i.e. for 8 hours) can save you 5% in fuel costs.
- Clean or replace the air filter on your furnace 2-3 times each winter. You can do this yourself. This reduces the work the blower has to do to move the heat into the ducts.
- Clean the chimney, especially if you burn wood, to prevent chimney fires. It is best to have a professional chimney sweep do this task.
- Move furniture and clutter away from the heating ducts and baseboards so that heat can effectively circulate and keep you comfortable.

For more energy-saving ideas, go to: [www.StayWarmNH.org](http://www.StayWarmNH.org).