



# EASY WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY AND MONEY THIS WINTER



With winter weather, comes increased energy usage. The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission is encouraging all Pennsylvanians to prepare now for winter energy costs. The PUC is committed to helping customers minimize their bills while making the most out of every dollar they spend on energy.

On the following pages, we've gathered a number of useful tips that can help you cut natural gas consumption and potentially save money. We encourage you to take a few minutes to review these tips. We're sure you'll see that cutting your energy consumption can be comfortable, convenient, and best of all, easy.

- **Enroll in Budget Billing.** Contact your utility and ask to participate in their budget billing. This requires no income guidelines and averages bills out over a 12-month period giving you a "fixed" amount to pay each month, not just the winter months. Note: Budget billing does not guarantee an annual fixed rate as budget bills are subject to quarterly adjustments based on usage.
- **Low-Income Programs.** If you are on a fixed income or a person with a low income, there are programs available to help you pay your heating bills and weatherize your home. Contact your natural gas company or the PUC at 1-800-692-7380 with questions or to see if you qualify.
- **Program It.** Install a programmable furnace thermostat that will lower the temperature automatically at night and raise the temperature when you are up and about. (This advice does not apply to homes using heat pumps.) For every degree you raise or lower the thermostat setting, you can see a difference of up to 3 percent in energy costs.
- **Turn Down Your Thermostat.** It's one of the most effective ways to cut your energy usage. If you can tolerate it and your health permits a slightly cooler home, lower the thermostat by a couple of degrees.
- **Turn Down Hot-Water Tank.** Turn down your hot-water tank to 120 degrees and set it at 140 degrees if you have a dishwasher to cut your power consumption.
- **Insulate Your Attic.** Make sure your home has a minimum of R-30 insulation in ceilings or attics (a contractor can help you evaluate your current insulation). By adding insulation, your home will be warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer.
- **Take a Look at Your Ductwork.** Dust, lint and other debris can block air vents and reduce the efficiency of your furnace. Be sure to keep ducts and grills clean.
- **Draw the Drapes.** Close your draperies when it gets dark outside. This will help cut heat loss through windows at night.

- **Close the Door.** If you're not using certain rooms in your home, close doors leading to those areas. Keep your garage door closed if you have an attached garage. Close heat registers and radiator valves in unused rooms.
- **Install a Ceiling Fan.** Heat rises to the ceiling of a room, circulate it down to where you are by installing a ceiling fan.
- **Install Storm Windows and Doors.** Drafts entering your home around leaky windows and doors can steal precious heat. Seal out the drafts with storm doors and windows. Replace any missing caulking, worn weather stripping or broken glass that may be letting cold air in.
- **Focus on the Fireplace.** Make sure the damper in your chimney is tightly closed when you're not using the fireplace. Save even more energy by installing glass doors on your fireplace - they can prevent valuable heat from being sucked up the chimney.
- **Put Your Thermostat in the Right Place.** Keep the area around your thermostat clear- drafts created by appliances or lighting fixtures can trick your thermostat into turning the heat on when it isn't needed.
- **Consider Installing New Doors and Windows.** Old windows and doors can let an amazing amount of heat escape from your house. Look into installing energy efficient windows and insulated doors.
- **Change Your Filters.** Clogged, dirty filters slow airflow in your heating system and cause your furnace to work harder and run longer. Consider having your furnace serviced and cleaned at the beginning of each heating season.
- **Don't Pre-Heat.** Most recipes can be completed successfully without pre-heating the oven. If you must pre-heat for baking, turn the oven on for just a few minutes before putting your food in.
- **Keep the Oven Door Closed.** Opening up the oven door lets out heat and drives up energy consumption. To use your oven more efficiently, try cooking several dishes of similar cooking temperatures at the same time.
- **Use Your Slow Cooker.** If you're preparing a roast, use your slow cooker to cook the meat and any vegetables you will be serving with it. This eliminates the need to use both the oven and the stove.
- **Microwave When Possible.** Microwave ovens cook food 75 percent faster and use less energy than conventional ovens.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION:

### WRITE

PA Public Utility Commission  
Bureau of Consumer Services  
P.O. Box 3265  
Harrisburg, Pa 17105-3265

### CALL

1-800-692-7380  
For people with speech  
or hearing loss, dial 7-1-1  
(Telecommunications Relay  
Service)

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