

SAVE ENERGY To SAVE MONEY



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HOT TOPIC

How can I take control of my high home energy bills?

Many people are concerned about high energy bills for their homes as they see rates climbing upwards. However, there are steps you can take to save money, live comfortably, and contribute to a cleaner environment by reducing the amount of energy you consume. Read on to learn about things that you can do at home to help reduce energy and save money.

The House

Air leakage can account for 25 - 40 % of heat loss in older homes. When heat is lost through the leaks in the home, rooms can become drafty and difficult to heat, resulting in a heating system that must work harder. This means more energy will be used which will drive your energy bills way up! Air leakage can also cause the air conditioner to operate longer and harder in the summer as it has to compensate for the warm air leaking into the house. Consider making changes to the structure of your home (walls, attic, basement floor/walls) that will help to keep heat in, reduce air leakage, and close up the gaps.

Identify Air Leaks

Use a “draft detector”, such as an incense stick, thin piece of tissue/cellophane, or a feather glued to a toothpick to detect where the drafts are coming from. Look for drafts on a very cold and windy day around door and window frames, attic hatches, exhaust fans, service entries, floor drains, foundation cracks, electrical outlets, and chimneys.

Prevent Air Leaks

Use caulking and weather stripping to seal gaps and air leaks. Caulking can be used to seal gaps and air leaks in fixed joints around window frames, wire and pipe entrances, electrical outlets, and the joints between the basement foundation and the main floor. Weather stripping should be used on moveable joints such as around the doorjamb and the edge and face of the door.

Keep The Heat In

If snow is melting on the roof or around the foundation, even on a cloudy day, then your attic or basement could be poorly insulated. Consider adding or updating your existing insulation throughout the home (attic, ceiling, exterior/basement walls, floors and crawlspaces) to help keep the heat in.

Reduce Your Heating Costs

Consider updating your heating system. If you have an older gas furnace, upgrading to a high energy efficiency furnace could save you as much as 40% on gas bills. Look for furnaces that have an Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency (AFUE) of 90 or greater. Lower the temperature of your home by a few degrees at night and when you are away to save money on heating costs. By lowering your temperature 2° C (4° F), you can save up to 4% on your fuel bill.

**Health
and
Wealth**
Invest for life!

Before you make any changes to your home, consider contacting an advisor from the EnerGuide® for Houses program to visit your home and help you make the right choices. You can find an advisor in your area on the EnerGuide® For Houses Web site at

www.energuideforhouses.gc.ca

Note: there is a cost for this service.

Home Appliances

Look for the Energy Star® and EnerGuide® labels on new appliances. The Energy Star® label identifies appliances that meet, or exceed premium levels of energy efficiency and can help reduce energy and operating costs by 30 to 50 %. The EnerGuide® label compares the energy consumption for different models of the same appliance by providing the energy consumption value in kilowatts per hour (kWh) per year. In general, the lower the kWh value, the more energy efficient. You can determine the yearly operating costs for a particular model by multiplying the energy consumption value by your local electricity cost. For example, compare the operating costs between two refrigerators:

Refrigerator 1

EnerGuide Rating (kWh/year) X local electricity costs (\$/kWh) = annual electricity cost
504 kWh/year X 0.07 kWh = \$35.28/year

You can also compare the cost of the appliance over several years:

Annual Electricity Cost (\$/year) X 5 years = electricity cost over 5 years
\$35.28/year X 5 years = \$176.40

Refrigerator 2

1024 kWh/year X 0.07 kWh = \$71.68/year
\$71.68/year X 5 years = \$358.40

When you compare the two models, refrigerator #1 could save you \$36.40 per year, or \$182.00 over 5 years.

Reduce energy consumption when operating household appliances by following these practical tips:

- Don't fill the refrigerator too full as this blocks air circulation and reduces its energy efficiency. Clean the refrigerator's coils and air intake grill regularly. Dust and pet hair build-up can cause the motor to work harder and use more electricity.
- Instead of using your oven for smaller cooking jobs or re-heating, use a microwave as it can use up to 75% less energy. Use an electric kettle to boil water instead of the less efficient stove.
- Do not pre-rinse dishes before putting them into the dishwasher. You will only end up wasting water. Instead, scrape off your food and empty any liquids first.

- To save on your water-heating costs, always use cold water on the rinse cycle for your washing machine. Using warm or hot water does not get your clothes any cleaner. Simply switching from hot water to warm uses 50% less energy!
- Replace any old incandescent light bulbs for compact fluorescent bulbs which use about 75% less electricity than incandescent bulbs, and last ten times longer.

To learn more about how you can reduce energy costs around the home and help protect the environment, visit Natural Resources Canada, Office of Energy Efficiency at www.oee.nrcan.gc.ca/Tips/introduction.cfm

Sources:

Natural Resources Canada. (2004). Energy and money-saving tips. Retrieved February 17, 2005, from <http://www.oee.nrcan.gc.ca/Tips/introduction.cfm>

Natural Resources Canada. (2004). EnerGuide: Keeping the heat in. Retrieved February 17, 2005, from http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/publications/infosource/pdfs/heat_in.pdf