

# Winter Energy Savings & Safety

Environmental & Occupational Safety

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## E n e r g y   S a v i n g s

Cooler weather can present a challenge to those who are looking for ways to use energy wisely and still have the comforts of home. Here are some tips to help you use energy safely and efficiently during the winter months.

- Insulate your home properly. Up to 20% of your heating can be lost through the ceiling.
- Adjust the thermostat. You can save energy and reduce your heating costs by turning your thermostat down. For every 2 degrees you lower your thermostat you can save approximately 5% on your heating costs.
- Use portable space heaters to heat one room or small areas, not your entire home.
- Set the thermostat on your water heater to mid-range (120°F), which will provide plenty of hot water for your needs and save money on your energy costs. Maintaining this temperature will not only save money but also reduce the risk of scalding. *Note:* Some dishwasher models require a higher temperature, so check your dishwasher owner's manual for the proper setting.
- If you have a pool or spa, check with your pool maintenance company about reducing the filtering time. In addition invest in a pool or spa cover to save on heating costs.
  - Caulk and weather-strip doors and windows to save as much as 6% on heating costs.
  - Close curtains at night to keep out the cold.
  - Replace incandescent bulbs with florescent bulbs when possible. Compact fluorescent light bulbs use up to 75% less energy and last 10 times longer.
  - Install low-flow shower heads to reduce energy and water usage.

### Special points of interest:

- Energy Savings
- Energy Safety
- Gas Inspections
- Furnace Safety
- Gas Appliances



## E n e r g y   S a f e t y

- Portable heaters, electric blankets and other heat-producing products shouldn't be used with extension cords. Plug them directly into the wall and unplug them before leaving the house.
- Don't try to fix appliance cords that are frayed, cracked or have exposed wiring. Either replace the appliance or take it to qualified contractor for repair.
- Keep bedding, clothes, draperies, rugs and any flammable items at least three feet from portable space heaters.
- Turn heat-producing appliances and products on low or off before you go to bed.
- Don't overload your circuits. Use only power strips and surge protectors approved by a nationally recognized testing laboratory. You can reduce the risk of fire by using low-wattage appliances and by not plugging more than two appliance into any outlet.



## G a s   A p p l i a n c e   I n s p e c t i o n s   a r e   a   M u s t



Well-maintained appliances are more energy-efficient and can save you money on your monthly energy bill. To safely and efficiently operate your gas appliances, a licensed heating or plumbing contractor should check your gas appliances every year. Failure to perform annual maintenance on your gas appliances may result in exposure to carbon monoxide which can cause nausea, drowsiness, flu-like symptoms and even death.

## F u r n a c e   S a f e t y

A clean and well-maintained furnace is a safe furnace and can save you money on your monthly gas bill. Here are some recommended tips to safely and efficiently operate your natural gas furnace:

- Have your gas furnace checked at least once a year by a licensed heating contractor.
- Many gas furnaces utilize air from the room to operate. Lint and dust carried by the air, or items stored in or around the furnace can obstruct airflow. In order to operate safely and efficiently, your gas furnace must be kept free of dust and lint build-up or other obstructions stored near the furnace, such as newspapers or cleaning equipment.
- Most forced-air furnaces have a filter that cleans the air before heating and circulating it throughout the home. The filter should be checked monthly for lint build-up during periods of furnace use, and cleaned or replaced if necessary.
- When installing a new or cleaned filter, be sure to re-install the front panel door of the furnace properly so it fits snugly. Never operate the furnace without the front-panel door properly in place because doing so may create a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Most newer forced-air furnaces have a safety switch that prevents furnace operation when the filter compartment door/panel is not in place. Some older forced-air furnaces do not have a safety switch and can be operated with the filter compartment door/panel off or not properly in place. These older furnaces, when installed in a closet and operated with the panel/door not in place, will circulate carbon monoxide throughout the house.
- Check the appearance of the flame. If the flame is yellow, large and unsteady, the furnace needs to be inspected immediately by a licensed heating contractor and the condition corrected.



## O t h e r   G a s   A p p l i a n c e s

Regarding the safe use of your other gas appliances:

- When operating a decorative gas log, open the fireplace/chimney damper completely.
- For energy conservation, close the damper when the gas log is not in use.
- Never use your oven, range or outdoor barbecue to heat your home because they are not designed for that purpose.