

Duke Energy Tips for Saving Energy and Money this Winter
(from Duke Energy's "Energy Efficiency Series")

Tip #1

Have your heating system checked before each season to make sure it's operating properly.

Tip #2

Keep your outside unit free of debris and shrubbery. They can block off the air flow that will cause your unit to work harder and longer; increasing your energy cost.

Tip #3

Set your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting. If you're going to be away for the day (around 8 hours) turn the thermostat down a few degrees. When you return be sure you don't set the temperature way up. Instead, set it back to its normal setting and let your home heat back up gradually. This will allow your system to not work as hard, thus saving energy and money.

Note: if you're going to be away for a few days, turn the thermostat to a lower setting. **DO NOT TURN IT OFF.**

Tip #4

On a clear and sunny day, open the blinds on the sunny side of your house to allow the sun's rays to heat your house. Be sure to close them as the sun sets.

Tip #5

Check the caulking and weather stripping around your windows and doors. This helps minimize the effects that cold drafts cause to your home.

Hint: Take a lit incense stick and run it around the perimeter of your windows and doors, holding it about an inch away. If the smoke rises naturally upward then you have a tight seal, but if it blows sideways you have a leak.

Tip #6

Sometimes caulking and weather stripping doesn't do the trick on older windows. In this case, cover your drafty windows with thin plastic to keep the air out. A window kit can be found at most any home improvement center and are easy to install.

Fact: Effectively sealing your home can save up to \$400 each winter.

Tip #7

While it is nice to enjoy a warm fire in the winter, using a fireplace to warm your home is actually counterproductive. It creates a vacuum that sucks all the warm air from your and releases it through the chimney. Cold air from outside will be sucked into your home through any crevice and crack it can find. So, when not in use, make sure your fireplace damper is sealed tight. **Warning:** Make sure it is closed only when there is no fire burning or ashes still smoldering in the fireplace.

Tip #8

Make sure you close any outside vents during the winter. Some homes have vents leading into the crawl space beneath a house. Forgetting to close these vents can be a costly mistake.

Tip #9

Clean, replace, or inspect your heating systems filters monthly. Dirty filters cause your heating system to work harder and use more energy.

Tip #10

If you use window units to cool your home in the summer, be sure to remove or cover them to prevent warm air from escaping in the winter.

Tips on Using Space Heaters

Tip #1

If you are heating your home with an electric heat pump it does not save energy or money to use a space heater as an additional source of heat.

Example: if a space heater is used to heat a 2 car garage 24/7 it could add up to \$50 a month to your energy bill.

Tip #2

If you live in a large home and only use one or 2 rooms it could be effective to turn your thermostat down to around 67 degrees and put space heaters in the rooms that you are using.

Warning: Be sure you read the owner's manual and warnings before using a space heater. If placed too close to another item it could cause a fire.