



# Saving Energy Around Your Home



**Fort Worth/Dallas**  
Home Inspection

With high electricity costs, and greenhouse gas concerns, it is more important than ever to do what you can to conserve energy—it is better for the planet and better for your wallet! Although heating and cooling account for nearly half (about 40%) of your energy bills, it would be best to take a whole-house approach to determine which parts of your house use the most energy. Below are a few useful and simple ways to increase your energy efficiency in your home and save on your energy bills.

- Ensure your home has proper and adequate levels of insulation. Check insulation levels in your attic, ceiling, walls, floors and crawl spaces.
- Ensure that your home has the adequate amount of ventilation in both the attic and crawlspace. Proper ventilation is important for a healthy attic and for a healthy crawlspace. Although opinions vary, most sources agree, for a healthy crawlspace, the common rule of thumb is to provide vents in cross sectional area equal to 1/150 of the floor area served, lower, if the crawlspace is covered by a membrane. For attics, the general rule of thumb on the amount of total attic vent space needed is to have at least one square foot of vent space for every 150 square feet of attic area. Ideally, half the vents should be located in the soffit at the bottom of the roof and half in gable or ridge vents near the top to allow for natural circulation of air through the attic. This ventilation and the resultant lower attic temperatures in the summer, which will help to lower your cooling costs and will also extend the life of your roof shingles.
- Look for cracks and gaps around windows, exterior doors, ceilings, walls and floors. Of the air that seeps into and out of your home, about 30% of it does so through openings in ceilings, walls, and floors. About 20% is lost through windows and doors. Make certain to repair or replace worn or damaged window and door gaskets, when they show signs of damage or leakage.
- Properly maintain your heating and cooling systems as well as your major appliances. By maintaining them on a regular basis, you keep them working at top performance, which translates into more efficient operation, and results in less energy usage.
- Use dimmers, timers and sensors and LED lighting to reduce energy usage from lighting. Place dimmers and motion sensors in high-use areas, or places where the lights are often left on. This can reduce energy consumption dramatically.
- Switch to LED light bulbs. Because they last significantly longer than regular bulbs, each bulb can save significant money in bulb cost, and enough energy to light millions more homes for the same amount of electricity!
- Turn off lights and home electronics when they are not in use. Unplugging home electronics and their chargers saves additional energy.
- Install a programmable thermostat in your home to regulate your home temperatures. Set a schedule for your thermostat so it automatically adjusts for periods when no one is home or at night when everyone is asleep. This can help you save 10-20% on your heating and cooling bills and you will likely not even notice a difference.

- Used in conjunction with a programmable thermostat, electric blankets and electric and non-electric throws can help you save you a significant amount of money on your heating bills and will help you to feel toasty and warm. And because they don't dry the air, like many heating systems do, you will probably breathe a little better at night with no loss of comfort.
- Keep window coverings (blinds, curtains) closed during the day and when you're running the air conditioner. This prevents sunlight from heating the interior of the house, which causes your A/C to run longer. In the winter and fall, keep your window coverings open during the day when you are running the heat. This lets the sunlight (and heat) in and helps heat the house so the furnace doesn't have to work as hard or run as long. At night, close the window coverings to reduce the heat loss from the cold air entering from the windows.
- Turn down the thermostat on your hot water heater. A setting of about 120-125 degrees is probably sufficient for most people, and the lower temperature reduces the risk of a scalding burn from water being too hot.
- Repair leaky faucets to avoid wasting water. Take showers instead of baths. Baths use, on average, twice the amount of water as showers do.
- Install low-flow faucets and showerheads. Low-flow showerheads use half the water as a regular showerhead with little or no loss of comfort.
- Make certain to fill your clothes and dish washer before running a cycle. Wash dishes in a dishwasher or clothes in a clothes washer when they are full, only. Running these appliances when they are not full means you will have to do another wash load sooner: multiple loads when a single load means more power and water usage.
- Make sure the refrigerator, chest freezer and oven door seals and gaskets are clean and close tightly. The seals should seal tightly every time you close the door. If they do not, then you will have air leakage, which makes appliances run longer and use more energy. Use an all-purpose cleaner or use a mix of vinegar and water to clean refrigerator and freezer seals. Use a spray oils such as PAM or similar sparingly on the gaskets, so as to soften them.



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