

Make Homes and Apartments Energy Efficient For Winter

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When winter weather arrives saving energy is important for home owners, renters and landlords. Energy saving ideas can be used whether you rent or own. Whether or not utilities are included in rent, renters end up paying for energy costs somehow. Everyone can help keep bills in check this winter by taking steps to conserve energy in their houses, condominiums or apartments.

The following measures decrease energy costs:

- Before choosing a rental unit in an apartment complex, consider its location. The most efficient apartments typically have windows facing south and are surrounded by other apartments.
- During the winter, keep thermostats no higher than 68 to 72 degrees. When people are not at home or are sleeping, decrease the temperature to below 65 degrees.
- Clean or replace furnace filters regularly, when needed.
- Allow winter sun in, especially through south-facing windows.
- Use window treatments to reduce heat loss. Keep window shades or treatments down or closed when it's cold outside and at night, especially for windows on the west and north sides.
- Use towels to stop air from coming in under the door or buy and install an inexpensive door sweep. If there is a leak around the entire frame, install weather stripping between the door and frame.
- For ranges and ovens, use pans that fit the burners, broil instead of bake when possible and use the kitchen exhaust fan when cooking for better air quality and moisture control.
- Keep the refrigerator door closed and make sure the seal doesn't leak.
- Run the dishwasher only when fully loaded or use energy saving settings for partial loads.
- When doing laundry, use warm and cold water for most items, adjust water levels to fit the load size. Clean the lint filter after every dryer load and don't overload the dryer, as items will take longer to dry.
- Disconnect or shut off unneeded or unused equipment. Check that appliances are energy efficient before purchasing them. Look for the EnergyStar label.
- For lighting, use task lighting, take advantage of sunlight and turn off lights not being used. If possible, use fluorescent bulbs, which last about 10 years.
- Put furnishings against cold walls for added insulation.
- Make sure furniture doesn't block registers or vents.
- Lower water heater temperature from factory-set 140 degrees to 120 degrees. Higher temperatures

may be needed for washing diapers, sanitation, and for a dishwasher without a heating element to boost water temperature.

Make your dwelling more energy efficient. Additional measures could include installing programmable thermostats, repairing cracked or broken windows, installing energy efficient windows, adding insulation, caulking or weather stripping windows, sealing along the sill plate, fixing leaking faucets and toilets to conserve water, and using low-flow faucets and showerheads.