



Winterize to Save \$\$\$

The Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy suggest these things to help you save up to \$1,300 on your home's utility bills:

The amount of energy that we waste through poorly insulated windows and doors equals the amount of energy as we get from the Alaskan pipeline each year. Electricity generated by fossil fuel for a single home propels more carbon dioxide into the air than two average cars. By using a few inexpensive energy-efficient measures, you can reduce your energy bills, and at the same time, help reduce pollution.

Go on a walking tour of your home, and pretend you're a cowboy with a caulking gun in your hand!

Plug the Gaps Outside: Keep the cold air OUT. Seal up all cracks on the exterior perimeter of your home. Areas around windows and outdoor faucets can let in a tremendous amount of cold air. Use a caulking gun to stop the leaks inside, too. Check whenever you see a crack or gap or feel a draft. If you can't afford to replace windows, you can buy an insulation kit for a very low cost.

Purchase new air conditioning, heating, or appliances: Look for equipment that has an Energy Guide label. Be sure that your air conditioning equipment is the correct size. A unit that's too big for the area it is intended to cool will perform less efficiently than a smaller, properly sized unit. And be sure to have it sized by a professional.

Programmable Thermostats: These adjust the times you turn on your units according to a pre-set schedule, yet are easy to override without affecting the daily or weekly program. You can turn down your heat at night and when you are not at home.

Ducts: Are hidden either over your head or beneath your feet and may be wasting a lot of your energy dollars. Unfortunately, many duct systems are poorly insulated or not correctly installed. Ducts that leak heated air add hundreds of dollars on your heating and cooling bills. Call a professional to check out your duct work and make sure they are sealed properly to save you money. Maximize your heating bills by having the ducts cleaned.

Fireplace: One of the most inefficient heat sources you can use. It literally sends your energy dollars right up the chimney along with columns of warm air. So be sure that the flue is closed when you aren't using your fireplace.

Laundry: Use less water and use cooler water. Switching your temperature settings from hot to warm can cut a load's energy in half. Buy a unit with a moisture sensor that automatically shuts off the machine when your clothes are dry. Keep in mind that gas dryers are less expensive to operate than electric dryers.

Zone Heating: Install a device that will heat the area of the home where you spend the most time, rather than heating the entire home.

Water Heaters: Wrap with a water heater blanket and insulate your water pipes to keep the water hot and save money. Remember to maintain your unit by flushing the water heater once a year. Check your owner's manual for instructions or contact us at www.home-warranty.com for instructions.

Solar Heating and Cooling: These systems are both environmentally friendly and cost effective. In many cases you can cut costs by more than 50% compared to the cost of heating the same house without passive solar equipment. If you are considering new construction or a major remodeling, you should consult an architect for passive solar techniques.

Insulation: The fastest and most cost preventative way to reduce energy waste and maximize energy dollars. You can increase the comfort of your home while reducing your heating and cooling needs by up to 30% by investing a few hundred dollars. Check out the website Interactive ZIP Code Insulation Program for the best insulation tips for the North Texas region. It's all about R-Values (how deep the insulation product is). The easiest and most cost effective way to insulate your home is to add insulation to the attic. To find out if you have enough attic insulation, measure the insulation. If there is less than R-22 (7 inches of fiber glass or rock wool or cellulose) you could probably benefit by adding more.

Roof: Check for broken, damaged or loose shingles, small holes and loose nails. Check the flashing around all dormers, vent pipes, chimneys and any other projections where the roof covering meets an adjoining surface.

Replace Door Stops: Check at the bottom of your exterior doors. If you can see light underneath a door, you're losing warm air! Don't forget about your garage door because most garages are not insulated.

Insulate Electrical Outlets: Hold your hand in front of an outlet on an outside wall and you'll be amazed at the cold air that comes through. Multiply that by all the outlets and image how much of your expensive energy is being compromised. You can buy an inexpensive kit that fits inside the outlet plate.

Weather-Strip Exterior Doors: Replace the weather stripping if you can feel air or see daylight. Check for dents, bends, breaks or loss of tension.

When very cold weather hits: Set the heater in your home no lower than 55 degrees, allow water to drip from any faucet near an outside wall and open the cabinet doors to allow heat to reach pipes under sinks. Disconnect all garden hoses and insulate your outdoor faucets with a "thermal cap" or wrapped rags and plastic.

Above all of these winterizing hints to help you save money, **the greatest loss of heat in a home is through the attic.** Better insulation helps in the winter and it will also help you stay cooler in the summer.