

Look at your entire home Energy management = savings

As homeowners prepare for fall and winter temperatures, home heating costs once again become a topic for discussion. With April's electricity rate-hike in Ontario and rising natural gas prices, many consumers are now looking for ways to save money on energy use while staying comfortable this winter.

"By taking a whole home approach, you may identify areas for improvement that could help save you money over the long term," says Dave Walton, Director of Home Ideas for Direct Energy Essential Home Services.

Walton outlines a few examples of how homeowners can cut their heating bills and conserve energy.

Natural Gas Price Protection Contracts

In the last five years natural gas prices have gone up 25 per cent annually. The average householder who signed a five-year Natural Gas Price Protection contract in 1999 will have saved over \$1,000 on their heating bills in those five years. Your first step to energy savings is to consider a fixed price or declining price Natural Gas Price Protection plan.

Heating and Ventilation

By ensuring that ductwork is free of dust and furnace filters are changed regularly, you can cut down on heating costs and help your furnace operate more efficiently.

Programmable thermostats that automatically adjust your home's tem-

perature settings can also save the average homeowner 10 per cent on the year's heating bill.

Insulation

Improving your home's insulation is one of the fastest and most cost-efficient ways to cut down on heating costs. Check the depth of insulation in your attic (it should be a minimum of 12 inches). Depending on your current insulation, you could save anywhere from 5-30 per cent of your bill.

Windows and Doors

Up to 30 per cent of the heating in your home can be lost through poorly fitted windows and doors. If your home has single-pane windows, consider replacing them with energy efficient double-pane, gas-filled windows with low-e coatings to reduce heat loss. Caulking around windows that don't open and weather stripping around windows that do is an inexpensive way to help you save money. Caulking one window 10 or more years old can save you between 5-10 per cent (\$10-\$20) per window per year in heating and cooling costs. Weather stripping will save you \$5-\$12 per window per year.

There are many more ways you can conserve energy and save money. For a free consultation or more information, call Direct Energy Essential Home Services at 1-800-266-3939 or visit www.directenergy.com

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