

Home & Garden

Upgrading the furnace can save money and energy

With winter just around the corner, now is the perfect time to check your home for energy efficiency and to make the adjustments necessary to reduce your fuel bills and conserve energy.

To help you prepare for the coming season, Consumers Gas offers some convenient, easy to implement, energy-saving tips that will save money and keep you toasty all winter long.

"Conserving energy around your home makes excellent economic and environmental sense," said Randell Lee, manager of residential demand side management programs at Consumers Gas.

"Conserving energy and money on your fuel bills can be as easy as lowering the temperature a few degrees on your home thermostat and cleaning the filter on your furnace," he said.

Check your furnace

Home heating takes a major share of the average household budget and a properly functioning, clean-burning, efficient furnace is key to saving money. The experts at Consumers Gas offer these helpful hints to maximize home heating dollars.

- Get a qualified heating contractor to check and clean your furnace before it's needed again for home heating.

- If your heating system has a permanent filter, clean it once a month during the heating season.

- Remember to change replaceable filters regularly.

Repair or Replace?

If you have an older furnace in need of repair, you may want to consider replacing it.

"Sometimes the most cost-efficient solution to improving home heating efficiency is to upgrade your old furnace," said Lee. "The value-conscious householder should always consider switching to clean-burning natural gas. It is the least expensive, environmentally preferable fossil fuel available."

- Today's mid- and high-efficiency gas furnaces can help reduce heating bills by as much as 60 per cent.

Lower your thermostat

Why waste energy heating your home when you're asleep or not there? If you lower your thermostat by just three degrees Celsius, for more than six hours a day, you may save up to seven per cent on your heating costs.

- Turn down the heat on your way out the door and before you go to sleep.

- A programmable thermostat eliminates the need to make daily adjustments. Simply set the times and temperatures and let the programmer do the rest.

Seal air leaks

"Hidden air leaks rank among the greatest sources of heat loss in most homes. Heated air seeps out

of your home through numerous cracks and crevices and is replaced by cold air from outside. You then must spend energy dollars heating this cold air up to room temperature."

Doors

- If the sill under your door has worn down, you can either replace it with a new threshold seal or attach a door sweep to the bottom of the door.

- Caulk between the door frame and the wall and between the threshold and the floor.

Windows

- Cracks can be repaired temporarily using clear nail polish until you can replace the pane.

Basement

- Fill any cracks you discover between the basement window frames and the foundation walls with caulking.

- Make sure

the insulation between the floor joists and the foundation wall is properly fitted.

- Use expanding foam to fill the draught space between pipes and the foundation wall.

- Caulk around the outside of the house where it meets the foundation.

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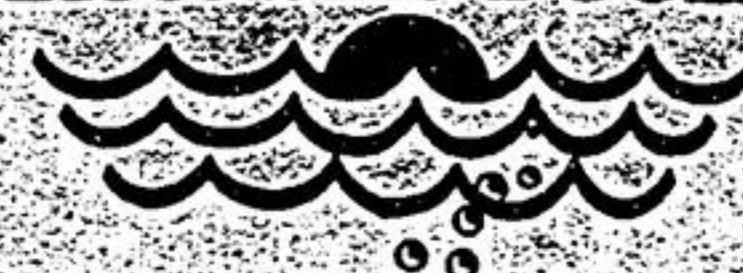
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