

Five Winter Energy Tips

1. Set your heating thermostat carefully and accurately.

Recommended daytime indoor temperature in winter is 68 degrees. Nighttime setting depends on the type of equipment you're using.

* **Electric heat pump:** At night, reduce the setting to 65 degrees (or lower if you have a programmable thermostat). If you drop the overnight temperature much lower than 65, raise it slowly the next morning (only 2-3 degrees at a time) to minimize operation of costly supplemental electric heat strips. Your operating cost can triple when the strips are on. Look for a small light on the thermostat that signals strip operation.

* **Gas or oil furnace:** At night, dial your furnace down to 60 or 55 degrees overnight. A gas or fuel oil furnace will reheat the house quickly in the morning.

* **Electric resistance "strip" heating:** Lower the temperature to 60 or 55 degrees overnight. Electric strip heating is the least expensive to operate. Set your thermostat low at night to avoid high costs.

2. **Set your thermostat's FAN selection to AUTO, not to ON. Avoid the ON setting.** It operates your indoor-air distribution fan nonstop. Doing so increases costs and reduces comfort.

3. **If you have a Heat Pump, be sure your thermostat is not accidentally set to EM HEAT or EMERGENCY HEAT.** Operating costs can triple in the Emergency Heat Mode.

4. **If you have a Heat Pump, be sure the big outdoor fan spins when you're heating the house.** That outdoor fan is easy to see. If it never spins but your house is warm, you're probably heating with supplemental electric "strips" only, at double to triple the Normal operating cost.

5. **Let the sun in!** If you have south, east or west windows, open your shades, drapes or blinds to let in the sun's heat during the day. It makes a surprising difference. Close all your window coverings overnight to hold in heat.