

The onset of winter means cold temperatures and higher energy bills due to the demands of heating your home or business. The US Dept. of Energy estimates that heating and cooling accounts for 56% of the annual energy costs in the average home. The City of Georgetown Electric Department would like to offer a few tips to help you heat more efficiently during the winter.

- Set your thermostat to 68 degrees (wear a sweater if you need to). Lowering your thermostat one degree can save 2% to 3% on your heating costs. If your winter electric bill is \$200, you could save about \$3 per month for every degree you can lower your thermostat.
- Lower your thermostat an extra degree or two at night and throw an extra blanket on your bed.
- Consider installing a programmable thermostat for tighter control of temperature.
- Most homes built before 1980 do not have enough insulation. Air space in walls should be insulated and make sure your attic space is insulated. Upgrading from 3 inches of attic insulation to 12 inches can save up to 20% of heating costs.
- Make sure doors and windows have weather stripping and caulk any cracks that allow air to escape.
- Place an insulated cover over window unit air conditioners.
- Keep curtains and blinds open when the sun can shine through windows (concentrate on the south side of your house). This will allow the natural warmth of the sun into the room. Close curtains and blinds when the sun isn't shining to help keep warm air in.
- If you have a fireplace, keep the damper closed when you are not using it. ***Be sure to open the damper before you start a fire.***
- Reverse the direction of ceiling fans during winter. Warm air rises and gathers at the ceiling. Reversing the direction of ceiling fans will push this warm air down into the room.
- Make sure that heating vents are clean and not obstructed by furniture.
- Check heating ducts for leaks and use duct tape to repair any separations where air can escape.
- Close off unused rooms in your house. Close the heating vent and keep the door closed if you have rooms that are not used regularly.
- Make sure you have clean air filters in your heating system to allow easier air flow and help your system operate more efficiently.
- If you are going to away from your home for an extended period, lower your thermostat to 55 degrees. This will save energy but prevent indoor pipes from freezing.

These tips can help you use energy more efficiently and minimize the effects of cold temperatures on your heating bills. Visit [www.energysavers.gov](http://www.energysavers.gov) for more tips from the US Dept. of Energy. You can also visit the City of Georgetown's Web Site for more information at [www.cogsc.com](http://www.cogsc.com).