



ENERGY EFFICIENCY

SCOTT'S ENERGY SPOT: WINTER WEATHER PREP

Tips from Firelands Electric's energy advisor



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Ready or not, cold temperatures, and the need for gloves, boots, and heavy coats, are just around the corner. Before snow-shovel season arrives, it's a good idea for members to start thinking about preparing their homes for the upcoming winter cold (and snow and ice that go with it) by preparing their homes' HVAC system, plumbing, roof, and yard for Ohio winter conditions.

The 11 tips below are a great place to start.

1. **REPLACE YOUR FURNACE FILTER** to improve airflow and air quality, as well as inspect your duct system for air leaks. Service your furnace and HVAC system. Schedule a professional to inspect and tune up your heating system to ensure it runs properly and efficiently.
2. **CHECK INSULATION.** Inspect your attic and walls for proper insulation to prevent heat from escaping. Consider adding more, if necessary. In Ohio, ENERGY STAR recommends a minimum value of R-49 for the ceiling and R-18 for the walls. Remember, the higher the R-value, the better your home will be protected from the cold outside making its way inside. Adequate insulation can also help prevent ice dams from forming on your roof, which can damage your roof and siding. (It's also a smart move to clean leaves, sticks, and debris from your gutters and downspouts.)
3. **SEAL LEAKS.** Use caulk or weatherstripping to seal cracks and gaps around exterior doors and windows. Installing storm windows and doors can also add an extra layer of insulation. Another option is a newly available type of storm window that is added to the inside, rather than to the outside, of the home.
4. **REVERSE CEILING FANS.** Changing the direction of ceiling fans to spin clockwise helps push warm air that has risen to the ceiling back down into the room, which can help make your living space more comfortable and lower heating costs.
5. **CLEAN THE FIREPLACE** to improve safety and efficiency. Buildup in the chimney can cause a fire. Clean at least once a year to not only prevent fire, but also limit carbon monoxide and improve air flow.
6. **INSPECT HEATING PADS AND ELECTRIC BLANKETS.** Inspect your electric blankets and heating pads for dark, charred, or frayed spots, and make sure the electrical cord is not damaged.
7. **MAINTAIN CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS.** Since you will be using your heating system more, test and replace the batteries in all carbon monoxide and smoke detectors to ensure they are working properly.
8. **CHECK THE SUMP PUMP.** Test your sump pump to ensure it is in good working order before heavy snow or ice melt by pouring some water into the pit to confirm it turns on.
9. **TRIM TREES.** Cut back any tree branches that are dead or hanging over your roof. Now is also a good time to visually inspect the power line coming into your home. Contact Firelands Electric to report any branches