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## Keep your Home Warm this Winter – and Your Energy Bills Down

*Green Mountain Energy Company offers tips to help consumers winterize their homes*

Austin, Texas – It's starting to feel a lot like winter. With cooler days and nights approaching, now is the best time to prepare your home for colder months. By taking a few steps to winterize your home ahead of time, you'll be able to keep your energy bills lower and your house cozy and warm all season long. Green Mountain Energy Company offers these seven tips for more efficient energy use that anyone can do for very little cost.

"We are offering these tips to let consumers know that energy conservation does make a difference for the environment," said Paul Markovich, senior vice president, Residential Services, Green Mountain Energy Company. "Because electricity generation is the nation's leading source of industrial air pollution, by reducing their electricity usage, consumers are also reducing emissions."

### **Tips for an Energy-Efficient Winter:**

1. **Schedule a tune up**—A yearly tune up for your heating system is recommended to prevent unforeseen, costly repairs and to ensure maximum efficiency. Winter and summer are the busiest seasons for contractors, so have a professional perform a thorough inspection in the fall before harsh weather hits.
2. **Caulk & Weather-Strip**—Homeowners who properly seal and insulate their homes **can save up to 20 percent** on heating and cooling costs. Seal any gaps in windows, doorways, and air ducts with caulk and weather strips. This will help keep the warm air in your home and the cold air out. Installing proper insulation in attics is something that can be done as a do-it-yourself project.
3. **Replace Air Filters**. When HVAC systems are in heavy use, air filters should be changed monthly. Clean air filters keep your system running at optimal levels, decreasing energy costs and helping to prevent earlier-than-expected repairs.
4. **Prepare your Water Heater**—By turning your electric water heater down to 120°F you can **reduce your hot water costs by as much as 50 percent**. To reduce unnecessary heat loss from the heater, wrap it with a blanket or insulation jacket. This can **save up to \$45 per year** in operating costs.
5. **Reverse your Ceiling Fans**—For the winter months, switch the direction of your ceiling fans so they are on the reverse setting (blades will appear to move clockwise as you are looking up). This will push warmer air downward and force it to circulate throughout the room, making better use of the heated air.
6. **Install a Programmable Thermostat**—By installing a thermostat that automatically maintains the proper settings, you could **save about \$180** a year on heating and cooling costs. Try to keep your house between 68 and 70 degrees while at home, and lower to 65 degrees when you are away. Doing so will **save you as much as 10 percent** on your heating bill. On average, a homeowner spends nearly \$1000 per year just to heat and cool their home.
7. **Don't Heat an Empty Room**. One of the easiest ways to heat your home more efficiently is to close the vents in rooms which are not used regularly. This will help keep the most frequently used rooms at the optimum temperature and help you decrease your energy use.

### **Energy-Efficient Winter Tips**

1. **Schedule a tune up.**
2. **Caulk & weather strip.**
3. **Replace air filters.**
4. **Prepare your water heater.**
5. **Reverse your ceiling fans.**
6. **Install a programmable thermostat.**
7. **Don't heat an empty room.**

### **About Green Mountain Energy Company**

*Green Mountain, the nation's leading provider of cleaner energy and carbon offset solutions, was founded in 1997 "to change the way power is made." The company is the longest serving green power marketer in the U.S. Green Mountain offers consumers and businesses the choice of cleaner electricity products from renewable sources such as wind and water, as well as a variety of carbon offset products. Green Mountain customers have collectively helped avoid over 4.9 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. For more information, visit [www.greenmountain.com](http://www.greenmountain.com).*

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