

ENERGY SAVING IDEAS

Make Your Home (And Wallet) More Comfortable

(NAPSA)—Most Americans will pay more to heat their homes this winter as all energy prices have increased in the last three years. Here are some steps consumers can take to use energy more efficiently and manage the costs of keeping their homes and families warm.

Keep the cold out

- Reducing air leaks could cut as much as 10 percent from an average household's monthly energy bill. For example, consumers can seal leaks around doors, windows and other openings with caulk or weather stripping. Check to see if the attic and basement have the recommended levels of insulation.

Use energy wisely

- Set thermostats between 65 and 70 degrees during the winter, and at 58 degrees when away from the house for an extended period. Warmer temperatures are recommended for homes with ill or elderly people or infants.

- Turn down thermostats automatically without sacrificing comfort by installing an automatic setback or programmable thermostat.

- Change or clean furnace filters once a month during the heating season. Furnaces consume less energy if they "breathe" more easily.

- Warm air rises, so use registers to direct warm airflow across the floor.

- Close vents and doors in unused rooms and close dampers on unused fireplaces.



There are a number of simple steps homeowners can take to make their homes more energy efficient.

- On sunny days, open draperies and blinds to let the sun's warmth in. Close them at night to insulate against cold air outside.

Long-term improvements

- Conduct a "Home Energy Audit" to determine specific household conservation needs. To find out how, contact your gas utility for information or access the U.S. Department of Energy at www.energysavers.gov for a "Do It Yourself Home Energy Audit" feature.

- Check the heating system and replace old, outdated appliances with high-efficiency natural gas models.

For additional money-saving energy tips, visit the American Gas Association Web site at www.aga.org.