

# Home Winterizing Tips To Help Cut Heating Costs

(NAPSA)—There are ways to control the costs of heating your home. That's important, because experts say a harsh rise in home heating costs is on the way.

According to the Energy Information Administration, the statistical agency of the U.S. Department of Energy, 55 million American homes heated with natural gas can expect heating costs to rise as much as 61 percent this winter.

Homeowners can't control the cold outside but they can control the anticipated increase in heating costs. The key is to educate yourself on ways to reduce the impact of rising energy prices through simple home-improvement projects. The projects can play an important role in keeping families warmer and utility bills lower during winter months.

Yet according to Douglas Faulkner, Acting Assistant Secretary of Energy Efficiency for the U.S. Department of Energy, it's surprising how many American homes are not nearly as energy efficient as they could be. "Homeowners don't realize that by making a few inexpensive home improvements, they can save 30 percent or more on their home-heating costs," says Faulkner.

To help, Owens Corning, in association with the Department of Energy, is distributing the "Energy Savers" booklet. It offers some of the following tips.

## Start at the Top

"If asked for the single, most cost-effective step consumers can take to save on their home energy costs, I'd offer five words: Head



**The right home improvements could cut heating and cooling costs by 30 percent.**

straight to the attic," said Gale Tedhams, an Insulation Product Manager at Owens Corning. "The attic is one of the most cost-effective and easiest places to add insulation, yet only 20 percent of the homes in the United States that were built before 1980 are insulated to current energy efficiency standards. Addressing your attic's insulation needs is also a cost-effective approach because homeowners can install the insulation themselves and the return on investment is compounded through the savings generated every year during the life of the home," said Tedhams.

Homes built before 1980 often have as few as three inches of insulation in the attic, while an energy-efficient attic should have at least 12 inches of insulation and a minimum R-value (the product's ability to block heat

from escaping the home) of 38.

Insulation in the crawl space, under floors and in basement walls helps stop the transfer of heat through the home as well. Try these additional ideas:

- Insulate water heaters and pipes: Heat loss will be minimized and the heater won't be overworked.

- Seal windows and doors: Blocking cold air from entering a home can reduce heat loss by 25 to 50 percent.

- Plug the drafts: Sealing, caulking and weather-stripping around all seams on the exterior of the house is the first line of defense against drafts.

- Install a programmable thermostat: Air temperature in the home can automatically be lowered and raised when residents are at work or home.

- Turn on the humidifier: Added moisture in the home will increase the "heat index," making 68° F feel more like 76° F.

- Homeowners can also visit the Owens Corning energy microsite. It features 15 ways to save energy, instructions on easy insulation projects, an insulation project calculator and the Department of Energy's R-value calculator.

As an additional resource, check out the Home Report Card™ online quiz. Based on a homeowner's answers, a customized "grade" is computed and recommendations are given on how to improve the energy-efficiency level of a home.

The microsite and quiz are at [www.owenscorning.com/home-reportcard](http://www.owenscorning.com/home-reportcard).