

Energy Saving Tips

Here are some Energy saving advice & tips that could potentially save energy, reduce your energy bills and improve your living conditions.

Some figures....

Did you know that the generation of heating and hot water is responsible for around 80% of domestic energy consumption and as such represents circa 75% of a home's carbon emissions.

Doors & Windows

Check your front and rear door(s) & all of your windows for any gaps that would let draughts through, seal any gaps with a decorative mastic sealant.

Doors & letter boxes

Check to see if your letterbox has a draught seal / flap on the inside of the door. A partially open letter box will cool the hallway significantly... especially if a newspaper or a "package" is not fully pushed through the letter box for the period that you are not at home.

You may wish to consider purchasing an appropriately sized lockable "mail box".

Door draught excluders

If you are using a "sausage dog" or draught excluder at the base of a door...hunt down the "source" of the draught(s) rather than use a draught excluder.

Floors & Skirting boards

There can be substantial draughts at the joints between the floor & the skirting boards, Think about sealing these with a flexible sealant product.

If you have "stripped" floorboards, look out for gaps & knot holes between the boards. Where possible have these gaps filled to avoid draughts from the sub floor area.

(Tip): if it's particularly windy outside....that's a good time to go on the "draught hunt" searching for any unwanted ventilation access points.

Basement / sub floor area

Should you have access to the sub floor area or a basement, you may wish to consider insulating between the floor joists by using insulation material which is retained in place by using netting attached to the underside of the joists, and whilst under the floor, make sure that any pipe-work is well insulated.

Open fires

Open flues create draughts (especially when they are not in use), consider purchasing a “chimney balloon” from a fireplace / heating stove stockist.

Log burning stoves

A log burning (or multi fuel) stove is noted as being more energy efficient than an open fire:- despite the high initial installation costs and with logs / timber being “seen” to be carbon neutral may be considered to be “more green” than burning coal.

Additionally, many of the “larger” multi fuel burning stoves can be adapted (by installing a heat exchanger / boiler) to heat and store (hot) water as well as for running radiators throughout the property.

It’s important to check with Building Standards / Planning section to confirm if your property lies within a smoke free zone.

Loft & Void space(s)

Check your loft area (or roof void spaces) for the minimum current recommended depth of loft insulation of 270mm (11 inches), and make sure there are vents installed to ensure air circulation in the loft space.

Remember that if you live in a top floor of a flatted property (which may have a communal loft area), have this area checked to ensure that the depth of loft insulation is also 270mm above all of the ceilings in the top floor flats, (remember to check with your landlord / factor if they hold an access key for this area before entering this area).

Where there is an access point to an eaves area (i.e. from bedrooms or an upper landing), make sure that these access doors / panels are well draught-proofed. The rear of the door / panel can also be insulated. This will ensure that any cold spots and draughts are minimised.

Room in Roofs (converted lofts / attics)

If there has been a loft conversion carried out at the property (some time ago or by an earlier owner) it may be worthwhile checking behind the timber stud walls for insulation material(s) as in some instances (when the conversion took place) there may only be 1” of insulation material “loosely” attached between the structural wall timbers.

This can be considerably improved, but advice should be sought from a competent builder as vapour barriers would need to be installed when new insulation materials are introduced / installed: - likewise “combe (sloped) ceilings” can be thermally improved by using “modern” insulation materials, but again advice should be sought from a competent builder before embarking on this type of work to ensure that there is an air flow into the void space.

Attic storage spaces (behind the loft conversion stud partition walls) can also be thermally improved, but advice should be sought to ensure these spaces are not left uninsulated and subsequent “cold damage” occurs to the items in “cold” storage spaces.

Loft tanks (after loft conversions are carried out)

Remember to heavily insulate all pipe-work work in the loft space, but not to insulate underneath loft storage water tanks... as the "heat from below" should ensure that the water within the tank will not freeze...

What type of room heating do you have?

Electric storage or panel heaters, individual gas fires, oil fired boiler or perhaps a gas central heating system over 15 years of age, may now not be as energy efficient as a new condensing gas boiler. Advice on boilers & alternative heating types can be given if you contact Home Energy Scotland (details below). If you already have a gas central heating system, ask yourself the following questions: - is the boiler serviced annually? have you checked the timer settings? & have you positioned any reflective foil panels behind the radiators?

Do you have a hot water cylinder?

If you do not have a combi boiler but are still heating and storing hot water in a storage tank; does it have a well fitted cylinder jacket...? If you can see the copper tank between the insulation material, it would be best to have this replaced with a new cylinder jacket, or just double it up with another hot water cylinder jacket over the top of the original one.

Do you have a programmable timer & room thermostat fitted?

If you do not have a room thermostat, but are reliant on thermostatic radiator valves (TRV's), it might be wise to look at the options for introducing a room thermostat or if it possible to "zone" the property.

If it is a retro fit situation it may be worth considering wireless heating controls....(Wireless packs include a new timer, wireless room & cylinder thermostats (where fitted and where multi zoning it is worth considering wireless TRV controls because these can provide local temperature control for each and every radiator.

Lights: LED's (light emitting diode) & CFL's (compact fluorescent light) Low energy use lighting.

Have you fitted CFL (low energy light bulbs) to lights and lamps which are used continually, and remember to install these CFL's into external lights or into the loft area.

LED's are still "costly" to purchase, but use a very small amount of energy as far as running costs, again it might be worthwhile looking at replacing all 50-60 watt halogen light bulbs with LED's to benefit from lower running costs.

Energy Suppliers

Often savings can be achieved on your energy bills by paying by Direct Debit or “on line”, rather than paying “when the bill(s) arrives”...Also some energy companies have various “green” tariffs which may be of some interest to you.

In addition, some energy companies offer “incentives” or free energy efficiency measures customers, so check their website or contact the energy company’s Call Centre for the latest offers for cavity wall & loft insulation offers.

NB: some energy companies offer insulation deals to all callers; you do not need to be a customer to receive the offer(s).

Other energy saving awareness reminders

Close doors when you leave the room to stop unnecessary heat loss;
Switch off plugged items on “standby”;
Don’t leave on mobile phones charging unnecessarily;
Use Energy Saving Light Bulbs (CFL’s) especially in lamps which are on continuously;
Close curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping through the window;
Fill your kettle up with only the amount of water you require;
Put the plug in the sink when you start to run the hot water tap;
Get the leak (on the hot water tap) repaired;
Use showers rather than baths (1 bath = 5 showers);
Select the temperature control on the washing machine to 30 degrees wash;
Wait until you have a FULL load for washing either dishes or clothes &
Remember that if you turn the thermostat down by 1 degree (this can equate to a 10% cost saving over a year).

Green Deal

For full details see the DECC website (shown below):-

http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/tackling/green_deal/gd_quickguides/gd_quickguides.aspx

DECC have an “abbreviated” Green Deal quick guide (see link below):-

<http://www.decc.gov.uk/assets/decc/11/tackling-climate-change/green-deal/6634-the-green-deal-a-new-way-to-pay.pdf>

Further advice about “**Green Deal**” & the “**Golden Rule**” can be found on various websites; & by entering “Green Deal” into any web based “search engine” further advice can be obtained for research purposes

The Energy Saving Trust also have a Green Deal guide for use (see link below... go to their web site and then search accordingly under Green Deal).

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/scotland/Publications2/Local-authorities-and-housing-associations/Legislation-and-policy/Briefing-note-Green-Deal-and-Energy-Company-Obligation>

Advice & Assistance:

For advice and further assistance please contact:-

Home Energy Scotland on Freephone 0808 808 2282 (free from both landline & mobile phones)

or,

East Renfrewshire Council Environment Department on 0141 577 8529

or,

visit the following web sites:

www.energysavingtrust.org.uk and go to home insulation in list of links

www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk and go to Housing tab then Energy Efficiency

www.uswitch.com or ukpower.co.uk for price / tariff comparisons

Or use any web based search engine and enter insulation as your “starter”

Alternatively, you may wish to research current consumer magazines are reporting, as they are often a useful source of information on Energy Companies performance. These magazines often carry out user *experience* surveys, then rank the energy companies... based on the results. Survey results are often based on cost, customer service, complaints handling, energy saving offers etc.

See which.co.uk for a “free” comparison search for an improved energy tariff.

Please note: there may be *less expensive* energy priced options in the market, but if you experience billing issues...you could spend some “time on the phone” seeking assistance. Your time & the cost of the phone call should be taken into consideration as part of the cost of being a customer with that energy company.

& Finally:

Whist care was taken to ensure that the advice contained in this document is accurate; it cannot replace expert advice.

It is intended as a guide only and the Council cannot accept any responsibility for any damage or loss incurred by an individual relying on the accuracy of the information.