

NEWS

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For Immediate Release
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Energy Trust of Oregon names top five energy savers for home this fall

Nonprofit offers free expert advice and cash incentives to help trim cold weather energy costs

PORTLAND, Ore. — September 27, 2012 — The crisp days of fall signal the start of rising energy costs for many homeowners as they turn on the heat and switch on the lights during the cooler, darker months. Fortunately, there are a variety of ways to lower energy use and energy bills this season with help from Energy Trust of Oregon.

Serving customers of Portland General Electric, Pacific Power, NW Natural and Cascade Natural Gas, Energy Trust offers a variety of resources for homeowners. The nonprofit offers Home Energy Reviews, with free advice and customized recommendations available by phone or in-home appointment, as well as incentives for energy improvements and connections to local Energy Trust trade ally contractors experienced in making energy-saving upgrades.

“Most any home can be made more energy efficient to help homeowners save money and improve comfort this season,” said Marshall Johnson, residential program manager, Energy Trust. “From easy changes to bigger improvements, Energy Trust can offer guidance and support.”

For homeowners looking for the best places to begin saving energy at home, Energy Trust offers these suggestions:

Top Five Energy Savers for Home

1. Seal up places where air escapes and add insulation

Most homes waste up to 60 percent of the energy they use due to hidden energy wasters such as air leaks, duct leaks and lack of insulation in a home. In fact, the small gaps, cracks and leaks in a typical home can add up to the same loss of energy and comfort as leaving a window open year round, and only 20 percent of homes built before 1980 are properly insulated.

Sealing air and duct leaks and adding insulation can dramatically increase comfort and save up to 20 percent on heating and cooling costs.

Use caulk or spray foam to seal up small holes and cracks around plumbing pipes, exhaust fans, dryer vents, sink and bathtub drains, fireplaces and under countertops. Use weatherstripping and door sweeps to seal up drafty windows and doors. A professional contractor can also be hired to test a home for air leaks and professionally seal your home.

Insulating a home's floors, walls and attic not only helps to reduce heating and cooling costs, but can also improve comfort throughout the year and reduce outside noise. Energy Trust offers cash incentives that can help with the cost to seal and insulate a qualified home from top to bottom, and connections to trade ally contractors to help with the work.

2. Turn down the heat

The heating system is the single biggest energy expense in most homes. To help save on costs, try lowering the heat at night or while the house is unoccupied. Homeowners and renters can save up to 3 percent for each degree of reduction. Using a programmable thermostat can help to make changes automatically.

Be sure to check air filters every month during the heavy use months of fall and winter. If the filter looks dirty after a month, change it. At a minimum, change the filter every three months. A dirty filter will slow down air flow and make the system work harder and waste energy.

3. Save water, save energy

Water heating is the second largest energy expense in most homes; in fact 20-30 percent of a home's energy is used to heat water. That's as much or more energy than most homeowners use for their appliances, electronics and lights combined.

To help trim costs, set the water heater to a maximum of 120 degrees (or to 140 degrees if your dishwasher does not pre-heat water). Each 10 degree reduction in water temperature can save 3-5 percent in energy costs. When doing laundry, use the cold setting for both washing and rinsing.

Wasting water wastes energy. The biggest culprit is the daily shower, which can waste up to 2,300 gallons of water a year in an average household. Switching to a water-saving WaterSense labeled showerhead can save up to \$44 a year in energy and water costs. A water-saving faucet aerator can save up to \$15 a year. Discounts on water-saving showerheads are currently available from Energy Trust at retailers statewide. See a list of participating stores at www.energytrust.org/showerheads.

4. Check lighting

Switching from traditional incandescent light bulbs to energy-efficient lighting at home is the easiest, most cost-effective way consumers can save energy, money and protect the environment. One ENERGY STAR[®] rated compact fluorescent light bulb uses about 75 percent less energy than standard incandescent bulbs and can last up to 10 times longer. Replacing the bulbs in a home's five most frequently used light fixtures (about 12 bulbs) with ENERGY STAR CFLs can save up to \$72 each year.

CFLs come in an array of tones from warm to cool, and are even made for specialty fixtures, such as chandeliers, recessed lights and three-way lamps. Discounts on these specialty bulbs are available through Energy Trust at participating stores statewide. See a list of retailers at www.energytrust.org/cfl.

5. Unplug and recycle an older, second refrigerator

Fridges and freezers built in the 1990s or earlier can guzzle up to \$200 a year in energy costs. That's a lot compared to today's more energy-efficient models that can cost as little \$40 a year to run. For homeowners who may have a seldom-used second fridge or freezer in their garage or basement, those extra costs can add up.

To help Portland General Electric and Pacific Power customers unplug and save, Energy Trust offers free refrigerator and freezer recycling, along with a \$40 cash incentive in exchange for the unit and free pick up. Call 1-866-444-8907 or visit www.energytrust.org/fridgerecycling to sign up online.

Schedule a Home Energy Review

To schedule a Home Energy Review, homeowners can visit www.energytrust.org/start or call 1-866-368-7878. Customers of PGE, Pacific Power, NW Natural and Cascade Natural Gas in Oregon, and NW Natural customers in Washington, are eligible for the free service.

Energy Trust of Oregon is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to helping utility customers benefit from saving energy and tapping renewable resources. Our services, cash incentives and energy solutions have helped participating customers of Portland General Electric, Pacific Power, NW Natural and Cascade Natural Gas save more than \$1 billion on energy bills. Our work helps keep energy costs as low as possible, creates jobs and builds a sustainable energy future. Learn more at www.energytrust.org or call 1-866-368-7878.

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