



Keep Power Bills Down

(NAPS)—Now is the time for Massachusetts residents to make sure their homes are as energy efficient as possible for when storms and cold temperatures hit and in the rare event of a power outage.

Here are some simple steps you can take to help keep monthly power bills down.

Short-Term Actions

Schedule an annual maintenance appointment for your furnace, boiler or heat pump. They should be checked, cleaned, and repaired annually. This:

- Improves efficiency
- Finds small problems before they become big problems
- Extends the life of your furnace.

Bleed radiators. Letting out air that gets trapped in your heating system will heat your home more effectively and reduce energy bills. If you hear pipes banging or gurgling, it's a sign your system needs to be bled.

Service chimneys. Also close your fireplace damper if you're not going to be using it and consider investing in a glass screen that lets heat radiate but prevents warm air from getting vented out the chimney.

Weatherstrip doors and windows. Even a removable door draft stopper can make a big difference.

Make sure air vents aren't blocked. If furniture or curtains block your vents, the furnace works harder, driving fuel costs up. If you really like the position of furniture covering a vent, consider a low-cost vent extender.

Conserve & Manage Energy Use

Keep the thermostat between 68° and 70° Fahrenheit while you're awake, and lower when you're asleep or away.

Add insulation to walls and pipes. This is a very inexpensive way to reduce your winter energy bill. Focus on your attic because heat rises, and this will keep heat in your living spaces. Also pay attention to electrical outlets, anywhere utilities enter the house, pipes (to prevent freezing and bursting), and appliances such as water heaters.

Adjust ceiling fans. Run fans clockwise in winter to push rising warm air down, potentially enabling you to lower the thermostat. In the summer, run fans counterclockwise to create windchill.

Unplug unused electronics. Also, consider switching to LED light bulbs, which are more energy efficient. Putting lights on a timer is both easy and cost-efficient.

Put rugs on hardwood floors. This provides a layer of insulation and can warm up a room—literally and figuratively.

Open the curtains during the day and close them at night. Letting the sun in—even the weaker sunlight of winter—can help naturally warm a room, while drawing shades and drapes at night helps keep heat in and prevents drafts.

Thinking Long-Term

Get a professional energy audit. The auditor will ask about your bills, and check to make sure it's properly sealed.

If you're income eligible, this audit



Proper planning can protect your home—and wallet—from the ill effects of rough weather.

could be free—along with additional discounted or no-cost services such as insulation and air sealing upgrades, new appliances and heating or cooling systems and more. Find out more at <https://www.masssave.com/en>.

Consider zoned heating. Target your heating and cooling, to where it's needed.

Switch to a smart thermostat. A programmable thermostat lets you fine tune when your furnace runs, letting you pre-set it at a lower temperature while you sleep or are away and have it turn up just before you come home.

Just In Case

Big storms happen, as do power outages. National Grid constantly improves efforts to reduce power outages, which involves everything from the simple (trimming trees around lines) to the complex (installing smart meters and technology that automatically locates and isolates outages and restores service as quickly as possible). To make sure you and your family are prepared if the power goes out:

- Keep a gallon of water per person per day in an easily accessible, air-tight container
- Have three days of non-perishable food on hand (including for your pets)
- Put together a first aid kit
- Make sure batteries work in flashlights, lanterns, radios etc.
- Keep matches, candles, flashlights etc. where you can find them easily
- Fully charge phones
- Have extra medication at the ready
- Fill your bathtub with water (to be used for toilet flushing)
- Turn refrigerator and freezer to coldest settings, keep doors closed as much as possible
- Gas up the car.

If you have a generator, make sure it's at least 20 feet away from the outside wall of your home. Never operate it in an enclosed space, employ GFCI protection, and use the proper cord.

Learn More

To learn more about the services and advice National Grid offers customers related to safety, reliability, affordability, and storm and power outage preparation, visit <https://www.nationalgridus.com/ma-home/>.