

# COLD WEATHER DRIVES ENERGY USAGE!



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## WAYS TO SAVE: Top 10 List of Winter Conservation Tips

### 1. THERMOSTAT SETTINGS

Thermostat settings are important when it comes to energy consumption and energy conservation. United recommends a thermostat setting of 68 degrees Fahrenheit or lower in the winter. **For a residence, every degree above 68 in the winter will cause an approximate 5 percent increase in monthly kWh usage.**

### 2. HVAC MAINTENANCE

**Heating systems use over half of the energy consumed in homes.** United encourages its members to continue to incorporate a regular maintenance program for the HVAC system(s) located at their homes. This maintenance includes regular filter changes and tune-ups, which will ensure that the system(s) are operating at peak performance.

### 3. SEAL AIR LEAKS

**Every hole in a home's energy envelope contributes to air infiltration and loss, which contributes to increased energy usage.** Make sure there is weather-stripping and caulking around exterior doors and windows. Plumbing and wiring penetrations in and out of the home should be sealed with spray foam where accessible. Install electrical outlet and switch gaskets on inside perimeter walls to prevent excessive air infiltration.

### 4. USE FIREPLACES WISELY

**While built-in fireplaces can be aesthetically pleasing on a cold, wet, winter day, they actually do not provide much heat for the home.** In fact, the hot air emitted from your central heating system escapes out of your chimney almost as effectively as the heat and smoke from your fireplace does, and keeping the damper open is equivalent to keeping a 48-inch window wide open during the winter.

### 5. ATTIC INSULATION

**One of the easiest ways to decrease the runtime of your HVAC equipment is to ensure that your home's attic is equipped with an adequate level of insulation.** United's team of Energy Innovation Experts recommends an insulation R-value of 38 in the attic. This is equivalent to 17 inches of blown fiberglass, 10 inches of blown cellulose, (2) 6-inch fiberglass batts, or approximately 5.5 inches of spray foam.

### 6. WATER HEATER

Approximately 15 percent of the total energy used in a home is consumed by heating water. **To ensure energy is not being wasted, water heaters should be set below 125 degrees Fahrenheit.** Water heaters that are stored in unconditioned spaces, such as the garage or attic, should be insulated with a water heater jacket to decrease heat loss from the unit. By adding insulation around the water heater and all plumbing leading from the tank, heat loss can be reduced by 25-45 percent.

### 7. SEAL HVAC DUCTWORK

**Leaks in the duct work can increase costs by up to 30 percent and reduce comfort.** Mastic, or tape designed specifically for HVAC equipment, should be applied to all duct connections to ensure that the conditioned air within the ducting is not escaping to unconditioned areas—such as attic cavities or crawl spaces.

### 8. SOLAR HEAT GAIN

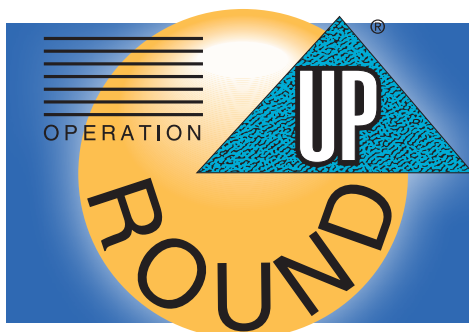
**Allow sunlight into rooms from south-facing windows to heat the area naturally. At night, close the blinds and drapes to assist in retaining heat.** Most conventional drapes can reduce heat loss from a conditioned room by as much as 10 percent. For maximum effectiveness, drapes should be hung as close to the window as possible, and should fall onto the window sill or floor.

### 9. POOL EQUIPMENT AND OPERATION

When it turns cold, the swimming pool may be the last thing one considers as an energy hog. **Pool pump operation times, if left unaltered from the summer months, will actually increase if the pool is equipped with freeze protection.** During the winter months, United recommends operating pool equipment at night or early morning hours to offset the freeze protection run time.

### 10. FREE ENERGY AUDIT

United is committed to educating the membership so that it's equipped to make informed decisions about energy use. **To obtain additional help in identifying ways to waste less energy and save money, members should request a FREE HOME ENERGY AUDIT today!**



**UNITED IS ALWAYS HERE TO HELP!** Financial assistance has been allocated through United's Operation Round Up Program to provide direct or third-party assistance to members in situations where help is not available through other channels. Members can contact any United office to learn more.