

Winter Proof Your Wallet: Ways to Save Energy This Season

Beaver County—The [National Energy Assistance Directors Association](#) projects that winter heating costs will rise by 7.6% this season. While this increase may feel intimidating for homeowners on a budget, there are a few measures they can take to help reduce winter heating costs.

“As we know, Pennsylvania winters can get exceptionally cold,” said Beaver County Association of Realtors® President Sara Lowman. “One of the best ways to save on heating expenses is to be conscious of your thermostat, including what temperature it’s set at and when.”

In the winter, lowering the thermostat by just a few degrees can noticeably reduce energy costs. Additionally, using a programmable or smart thermostat to set heating schedules helps conserve energy and money. Homeowners can schedule the heat to automatically lower when they’re asleep or away, ensuring energy isn’t wasted.

“I always recommend checking insulation as well,” Lowman added. “Adding, replacing and upgrading insulation can make a huge difference in the way your home retains heat.”

Homeowners should check to see whether their homes’ insulation needs to be replaced, and they can consider changing to a different type of insulation, too. Efficient insulation is important for keeping heat in, especially in areas of the home like the attic and basement.

Another way to ensure heat stays inside is to check doors, windows and other openings for air leaks. Sealing these areas with weatherstripping (or using a door sweep) reduces heat loss. Homeowners can also upgrade to energy-efficient windows and try thermal curtains to retain heat.

“Of course, it’s also always a good idea to make sure your HVAC system is running properly,” Lowman said. “Depending on your home, schedule an HVAC inspection, a furnace tune-up and/or a chimney cleaning to make sure your home is being heated safely and efficiently.”

Other ways to save heat and heating costs include layering clothing indoors, heating only the rooms in use, keeping rugs on bare floors and opening curtains on sunny days.

“You may not be able to avoid increasing heating prices, but putting these tips into practice can help you stay comfortable without overspending too much,” Lowman concluded. “Realtors® are home experts and can also guide you toward homes with efficiency features that save more.”