

# Energy Efficiency and Air Quality

Zero waste also means not wasting energy. Here are some tips to help you keep out that cold winter air and to reduce your energy load. This issue will start with free or very low cost options for reducing energy use. We'll look at bigger efforts in later issues.

## WINTER HOME ENERGY TIPS

### Weatherize!

- **Weather strip.** You should never be able to see light or feel a breeze around windows and doors. If you do, that's money and energy pouring out of your house. Plug those energy leaks by weather stripping between moving parts (doors and their frames) and caulking or sealing between nonmoving parts (window frames and walls).
- **Insulate properly.** Make sure there's enough insulation installed and that it's the right type for the job. Check periodically to be sure it is all still in place and no gaps have formed



### Technology Control

- **You're the boss – so manage your home office equipment.** Activate "sleep" features on computers, copiers, and other machines that power down when the equipment is on but not in use for a while. Turn off equipment during periods of non-use to cut energy costs and improve longevity. Screen savers do NOT save energy. Plug your equipment into a surge protector power strip. This not only protects equipment from electrical surges but allows easy access to power so you can shut everything down with one switch.
- **Stop the energy theft.** Electronics such as phones, TVs, VCRs, DVD players, and cable boxes all consume energy even while switched off. This energy keeps display clocks lit and memory chips and remote controls working. Even your innocent-looking phone charger and other "black box" gadgets are sucking up electricity when your phone or video game isn't charging.

### Light the Way

- **Let the sunshine in.** In colder months, allow the sun to help heat your home by keeping blinds or drapes on sun-exposed windows open in the daytime. Retain the heat overnight by closing the blinds after dark.
- **Light efficiently.** With lights on much of the day during winter, electricity use invariably increases. Save money by installing compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) and use up to 75 percent less energy than either halogen or incandescent bulbs. And turn off the light when you leave the room!

### Heat Tips!

- **Be an "Energy Star."** To cut energy expenses by up to 30 percent, choose ENERGY STAR-certified clothes washers, dishwashers, air conditioners, refrigerators and freezers, as well as computers, monitors, printers, scanners, copiers, fax machines and many other home and home office products. [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)
- **Zone your home.** While working in your home office, close off the heating vents in unoccupied rooms.
- **Tune up your house.** Clean or replace furnace and room air conditioner air filters once a month for increased efficiency. Give your furnace or heat pump a professional "tune-up" each year, and ask the technician to make sure the system is sized and operating at peak efficiency and that ducts are not leaking. Look for ENERGY STAR furnaces and heat pumps.

[www.nwf.org/goodneighbor/homeenergytips.cfm](http://www.nwf.org/goodneighbor/homeenergytips.cfm) – real-life examples from real people.  
[www.ase.org/taxcredits](http://www.ase.org/taxcredits) – get money back when you make improvements in 2009.

## AIR QUALITY CORNER

*Alaskan Winter "Plug It In" Protocol*

**When the temperature drops below 20°F, plug in your engine block heater if you do not park in a garage.**

### Plug in for just a few hours

Only warm up your engine block heater for two to three hours before driving. That's all it needs for maximum efficiency.

### Timers save

The Anchorage Department of Health & Human Services reminds you that engine block heaters reduce air pollution from starting cold engines by up to 60%. Using a timer on your block heater can save you money. On January 10, 2009, the Anchorage FREEZE Project will distribute a limited number of programmable timers. Go to [www.freezeproject.org](http://www.freezeproject.org) for more information.

### Cold idling

If you start your engine cold (if you can't plug in), be sure to warm it up for ten minutes. Idling more or less than ten minutes causes more pollutants, which also means the engine is running inefficiently and using more fuel.

### Unplug it

Remember to unplug before you drive away!

