

# Energy Efficiency and Air Quality

Here are some tips to help you reduce your energy load through the winter months. These tips will help us all conserve gas and support the Municipality's goal of reducing natural gas use where we can.

## WINTER HOME ENERGY TIPS

**Fans in Winter?** By running your ceiling fans in reverse in winter, you can create a more comfortable living space for less money. While counterclockwise rotation produces cooling breezes, switching to clockwise makes it seem warmer by making an updraft that sends the warmer air pooled near the ceiling back into the living space. This is especially useful in homes with cathedral ceilings.

**Program Your House.** Your current thermostat can be set up or down whenever you want but do you remember to do it? Behavior is one of the biggest barriers to energy efficiency so take the error out of the equation by installing programmable thermostats in your house. These are inexpensive and you can save about 8% a year on your heating bill by properly setting your programmable thermostat and maintaining those settings. Visit [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov) and click on Products, then choose Programmable Thermostats under Heating & Cooling for information about finding the right thermostat, installing it, and the best settings for optimal energy savings.

**Monitor Your Usage.** Thanks to a local Eagle Scout, Anchorage residents can now check how much energy their appliances are using as easily as they can check out a book from the library. Kill-A-Watt meters are available through the Anchorage Public Library system. Local middle schools and high schools also have watt meters available for students to check out and take home to check energy usage. Knowing how much energy is being used is one of the best ways to start reducing your usage.

**Go LED.** Here in Anchorage, we celebrate the winter season with outdoor lights much longer than in other parts of the country. Lights are lit typically from mid-October through mid-March. While these lights help us tolerate the long, dark winter, they also can make quite a dent in our electricity bill. Using a combination of LED holiday lights and timers can ease the pain. Based on our long season, LEDs can easily pay for themselves in just one season and they last much longer than regular holiday lights.

Look for LED lights and timers in local hardware stores and home and garden centers. And be sure to reset your timers periodically as daylight changes – it moves fast in Alaska!

For more ideas about making your home more energy efficient and a free home energy audit tool, log on to the Home Energy Saver at <http://hes.lbl.gov/hes>.

Low-income residents may qualify for the Municipality of Anchorage Weatherization Program. Check it out at [www.muni.org/departments/neighborhoods/programs](http://www.muni.org/departments/neighborhoods/programs).

AHFC Research Information Center's web site includes a wide range of information and links on energy efficiency at [www.ahfc.state.ak.us/energy/ric.cfm](http://www.ahfc.state.ak.us/energy/ric.cfm).

If you don't want to discard all those old strings of holiday lights, here's a deal for you! Send your old holiday lights to [HolidayLEDs.com](http://HolidayLEDs.com) and they will recycle them for you and give you a coupon for 15% off. The program runs through the end of February 2010. For details, visit [www.holidayleds.com/holidayledscom\\_christmas\\_light\\_recycling\\_program](http://www.holidayleds.com/holidayledscom_christmas_light_recycling_program).

## AIR QUALITY CORNER



### Plug In

Plugging in your vehicle when the temperatures drop below 20° F will reduce air pollution from cold starts by as much as 60%, will reduce wear

and tear on your engine and will speed up the time it takes for your car to warm up.

Reduce energy use by putting your engine block heater on a timer. Free timers will be distributed through the Municipality of Anchorage Department of Health and Human Services this fall. Check [www.muni.org/departments/health/environment/airq](http://www.muni.org/departments/health/environment/airq) for dates and locations of timer giveaways. This site will be updated as giveaways are scheduled.



### Bike to Work

Biking to work isn't just a summertime activity. Winter biking is becoming more popular. Visit [www.bicycleanchorage.org](http://www.bicycleanchorage.org) for information

about biking in Anchorage, tips for dressing properly, the best routes, and how to take action to help make Anchorage more bicycle friendly.

REI often hosts free classes for bike commuters. Visit [www.rei.com/stores/store\\_events.jsp?store=16](http://www.rei.com/stores/store_events.jsp?store=16) for a list of classes available this season.



### Take the Bus

People Mover ([www.peoplemover.org](http://www.peoplemover.org)) offers these reasons to ride:

- It's cheaper than a gallon of gas.
- It's convenient. With more than 1,100 bus stops, there's sure to be one near you.
- All buses are fully accessible.
- It's healthy. Get more exercise by walking to bus stops or Bike-to-Bus.
- Reduce your carbon footprint.
- Arrive to your destination refreshed, not stressed.
- With 16 routes, chances are one is going your way.
- Time spent on the bus can be used to catch up on work, read or just relax.
- Feel more connected to your neighbors and community.
- Tax benefits can boost your bottom line.
- Parking your car for a few days a week can significantly reduce wear and tear, help keep mileage down and value up.
- Books on Buses
- It's cheaper than a vanilla latte.
- Never have to worry about finding a parking space.
- Seniors ride free on Wednesdays
- We offer free Travel Training