



**Bundle Up,  
It's Winter Time!**

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**Space Heater Safety**

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## Don't be Fooled by Common Energy Myths

Eating carrots will greatly improve your eyesight, cracking your knuckles leads to arthritis, watching too much TV will harm your vision. We've all heard the old wives' tales, but did you know there are also many misconceptions about home energy use? Don't be fooled by common energy myths.

### **1 MYTH: The higher the thermostat setting, the faster the home will heat.**

Many people think that walking into a chilly room and raising the thermostat to 85 degrees will heat the room more quickly. This is not true. Thermostats direct a home's HVAC system to heat or cool to a certain temperature. Drastically adjusting the thermostat setting will not make a difference in how quickly you feel warmer. The same is true for cooling. The Department of Energy recommends setting your thermostat to 78 degrees during summer months, and 68 degrees during winter months.

### **2 MYTH: Opening the oven door to check on a dish doesn't really waste energy.**

While it can be tempting to check the progress of that dish you're cooking in the oven, opening the oven door does waste energy. Every time the oven door is opened, the temperature inside is reduced by as much as 25 degrees, delaying the progress of your dish and, more importantly, costing you additional money. If you need to check the progress of a dish, try using the oven light instead.

### **3 MYTH: Ceiling fans keep your home cool while you're away.**

Ceiling fans cool people, not rooms. Ceiling fans circulate room air but do not change the temperature. A running ceil-

ing fan in an empty room is only adding to your electricity use. Remember to turn fans off when you're away and reduce your energy use.

### **4 MYTH: Reducing my energy use is too expensive.**

Many consumers believe that reducing energy use requires expensive up-front costs, like purchasing new, more efficient appliances or construction upgrades to an older home. But the truth is, consumers who make small changes to their energy efficiency habits, such as turning off lights when not in use, sealing air leaks and using a programmable thermostat, can see a reduction in energy consumption. Remember, energy efficiency doesn't have to be difficult. Focus on small changes to save big.

Pitt & Greene EMC  
will be closed ✦  
Monday, Jan. 2,  
for New Year's and  
Monday, Jan. 16,  
for Martin Luther  
King, Jr. Day.

*Happy  
New  
Year*



Are you ready for winter's cold grasp? Winter storms can wreak havoc on your home. By winterizing your living space, you'll be prepared for extreme cold and hazardous conditions. Pitt & Greene EMC recommends the following tips to help you prepare for wintery blasts.

- Remember to maintain and inspect heating equipment and chimneys every year to ensure they're working safely and properly.
- Caulk and weatherstrip doors and windows to make the most of your heating system.
- Freezing temperatures often cause water pipes to burst. Remember to insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic. Allow faucets to drip during extreme cold to avoid frozen pipes.
- Consider installing storm windows for better insulation. You can also cover windows with plastic (from the inside) to keep the cold out.
- Make sure everyone in your family knows where the home's fire extinguisher is located and how to use it properly. House fires occur more frequently during winter months, as people tend to use alternative heating methods that may not be safe.
- **Food:** Store food that does not require cooking, such as canned goods, crackers, dehydrated meats and dried fruit. Keep a large supply of water on hand. **Ready.gov** recommends five gallons per person.
- **Medication:** Be sure to refill all prescriptions in the event of a major power outage.
- **Identification:** Keep all forms of identification handy, such as driver's licenses, photo IDs and social security cards. Bank account information and insurance policies are also good to have on hand.
- **Other items:** First Aid Kit, blankets, flashlight, battery-powered radio and extra batteries.

Severe winter storms can cause heavy accumulation of ice and snow, which can lead to downed power lines and extended outages. Although it has been several years since we have had any severe winter weather, we still want you to be prepared by having a winter survival kit on hand.

If an outage occurs, you should plan for an alternate heating source. A fireplace, propane space heater or wood-burning stove would be sufficient. Fuel and wood-burning heating sources should always be vented, and make sure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working properly. Always practice extreme caution when using alternate heating sources.

If you decide to use a portable generator during an outage, make sure it is placed outside the home for proper ventilation. Be careful not to overload the generator. Use appropriate extension cords that can handle the electric load.



Congratulations to the following employees and directors who were recently recognized for their years of service to Pitt & Greene EMC: Donnie Arnold, 5 years; Dick Martin, 5 years; Trey Radford, 5 years; Debbie Denton, 15 years; Robert Wood, 25 years; Tony Vandiford, 55 years; and directors Mike Hardy and Garland Mazingo, 15 years. Donnie Johnson was recognized for his retirement after 48 years of service with the cooperative.

# Space Heater Safety

As temperatures drop this winter, many will look for supplemental heating sources for their homes. Space heaters can be a good alternative for those who want to warm one area of their home without turning up the thermostat on the central heating system. However, space heaters are also responsible for 32% of house fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association. If you are planning to use a space heater in your home this winter, review these tips to keep you, your family and your property safe.

## Materials

What are the components of your space heater made of? Parts like metal grating can be hot to the touch and may burn anyone who gets too close. Make sure you purchase a heater that is cool to the touch and has guards over the coils just in case little fingers get too close.

## Placement

While it can be tempting to place a small heater on a shelf so it is not in the way of pets and children, it is safest to leave the heater on a level floor on a nonflammable surface. Keeping the space heater on the floor can keep it from falling over, preventing fire hazards. Also, remember that space heaters and bathrooms are not a good combination, unless the heater is designed for bathroom use. Moisture can damage the heater.

The most important rule about space heater placement is the three-foot rule. Whether you are using the heater in the bedroom, living room or kitchen, space heaters should always be kept three feet away from flammable materials and out of the way of children and pets.

## Special Features

Does your space heater have an auto shutoff function if tipped over? Auto shutoff can be a lifesaver. If you currently own a space heater without auto shutoff, consider purchasing a heater with this important safety feature.

## Cords

You should never use an extension cord when plugging in a space heater as it can cause overheating. The space heater should be plugged directly into a wall outlet, and should be the only thing plugged into the wall outlet. Also, make sure cords aren't in a high-traffic area so they are not a tripping hazard.

## Use

Never leave a heater unattended while in use. If you are leaving your home or going to bed, make sure to unplug the heater.

Following these tips and making sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions can keep you safe this winter.



## Energy Efficiency

### TIP OF THE MONTH

Insulating your electric water heater can reduce standby heat loss by 25% to 45%, saving you 7% to 16% on annual water heating costs.



The Dept. of Energy rates this project as medium difficulty, meaning most homeowners can tackle this project on their own. You can purchase pre-cut jackets or blankets for about \$20 at most home improvement stores. Visit [energy.gov](https://www.energy.gov) for project tips and additional considerations.

*Source: EIA and DOE*

## Reminder

Colder weather has arrived, have you thought about what your heating system is set on? For example, if you have the thermostat set on 73, the system will come on more to keep it that desired temperature than if you have it set on a lower setting. The colder it is outside the more your heating system will run to keep your home warm, which will make your utility bill higher. So when you receive your utility bill and it is higher than usual, remember the colder weather outside and what your thermostat was set on inside.

# 10 Quick Tips to Avoid High Winter Bills

Want to lower your bills this winter? Use the 10 tips below to conserve energy.

1  Seal air leaks and insulate well to prevent heat from escaping and cold air from entering your home.

2  Reduce waste heat by installing a programmable thermostat.

3  Turn off lights when not in use.

4  Lower your water heater temperature. The Dept. of Energy recommends using the warm setting (120 degrees) during fall and winter months.

5  Unplug electronics like kitchen appliances and TVs when you're away.

6  Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow sunlight in to warm your home.

7  Close blinds and curtains at night to keep cold, drafty air out.

8  Use power strips for multiple appliances, and turn off the main switch when you're away from home.

9  Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.

10  Replace incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75 percent less energy.

*Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy*



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