

Energy Saving Tips

from the MSU Extension Housing and
Environmental Health Program



Clean furnace filters save energy dollars

One of the simplest ways to save money each winter is to change your furnace filter regularly. If you have a forced air heating system, look for this filter near the blower compartment or in a cold air return register. Its purpose is to trap dust and dirt so they don't collect in the blower and reduce the flow of heated air into your home. But if the filter is clogged, the system can't run efficiently. Check the filter once a month during the heating season and clean or replace it as necessary. Make sure that all hot air registers are open and unobstructed. That antique cabinet from your grandma looks nice, but it isn't good for the cabinet or for your heating system if it is sitting on top of a hot air register. Likewise, make sure the cold air returns are open and accessible.

If you are feeling ambitious, check accessible duct work for leaks and seal them with duct mastic (a special paste available from a heating contractor or heating supply store). If ducts located in an unheated space are not insulated, you may want to add insulation to them. Use foil faced fiberglass with the foil facing out or use insulation made specifically for ducts. Secure the insulation with contractor grade duct tape.

While you are dealing with your furnace, it's a good time to install a carbon monoxide detector in your home. These are easy to install and look like a smoke detector. In the event of a malfunction in any of your gas appliances, the detector will warn you of the hazard. Be sure to replace the batteries each year or more often if suggested by the manufacturer.

For free information and energy saving tips, contact the MSU Extension Housing and Environmental Health Program at (406) 994-3451. To download free energy brochures, go to www.weatherization.org/energytopics.htm



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