Energy Saving Advice

Swindon Safe & Warm

Swindon Borough Council

Why save energy?

- To save money
- To help the environment

Here are some simple ideas to help you save money on your fuel bills. As well as making your money go further saving energy can also:

- Make you warmer, more comfortable and healthier
- Reduce the chance of winter freeze-ups

And by being a bit more thoughtful in how you use hot water, cook food, use appliances and light your home, you can cut your fuel bills even more. Why not ask your energy centre or adviser for a home visit and see what they can do to help you save energy?

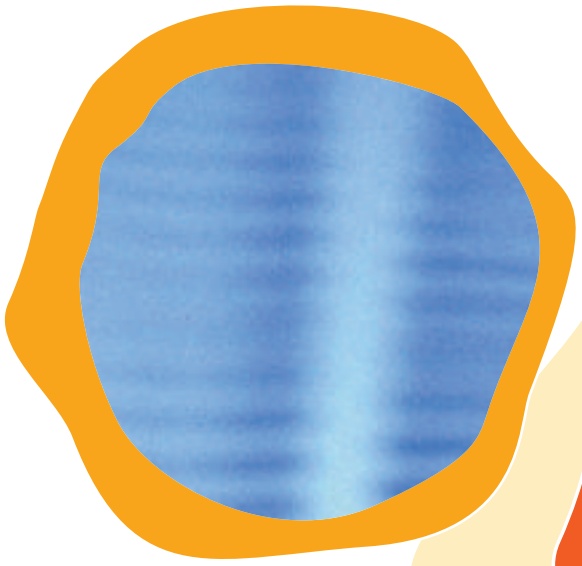
In this document you will find information about:

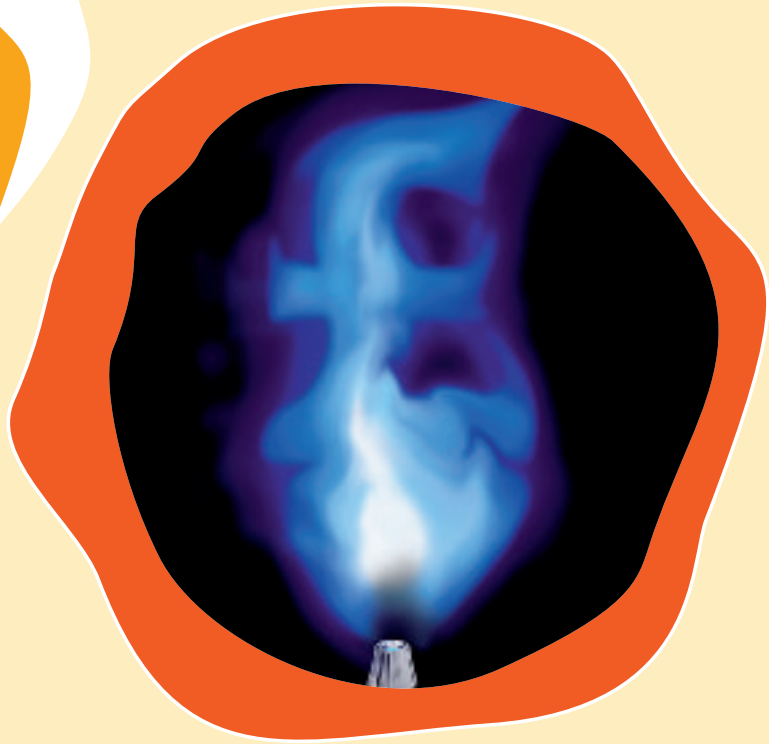
- Saving money on your heating
- Savings with insulation
- Hot water savings
- Savings in the kitchen
- Lighting
- Appliances

Saving money on your heating

If you have central heating:

- If you work or are out at regular intervals set your timer controls to go off shortly before you leave and come on shortly before you are due home. Try half an hour to an hour depending on how fast it takes your home to heat up and how cold it is outside.
- Turning down the room thermostat, if you have one, by 1°C can save you up to 10% on your fuel bills. Recommended room temperature for living areas is 18°C to 21°C.
- If you do not have a room thermostat you may have TRVs (Thermostatic Radiator Valves) on your radiators. You can turn these down by one click at a time, so you are not unnecessarily heating seldom used rooms.
- Put aluminium foil behind any radiators fitted on outside walls. This will reflect heat back into your room. Make sure curtains are tucked behind radiators.
- Make sure the heating system is serviced at least once a year (consult your landlord where appropriate).
- If your boiler is over 15 years old, a new A-rated boiler could cut your bills by a quarter.
- Check that furniture isn't blocking the heat from the radiators.
- If your heating system contains electric storage heaters, make sure you understand how they work. If you are unsure seek help.





Storage heaters

- Storage heaters should run on the Economy 7 tariff, which provides cheaper electricity for seven hours at night time (usually between the hours of midnight and 7am) but is slightly more expensive during the day. There may be a choice of other tariffs, depending on your energy supplier, that can be used for storage heating.
- The storage heater 'charges up' during the cheaper rate (over night) and then gradually releases the heat the following day. To make sure you get the cheapest heat you must set the controls correctly.
- The input control (or charge control) regulates the amount of heat that goes into the heater overnight.
- In very cold weather the input control should be set high; when it's not so cold the control can be set lower, adjust these regularly to save money.
- The output control regulates the amount of heat released into the room. The output should be left on the lowest setting during the day and turned up during the evening, if more heat is needed.
- It is important to remember to turn the output back to minimum before going to bed. Also, if the output is left on a high setting for long periods during the day there may not be enough stored heat left for the evening.

If you don't have central heating:

- When buying room heaters, make sure they are the right size for the room; too much heat wastes money.
- Buy heaters with thermostats and set them correctly so that the heater only comes on when you need it.
- Be aware that plug-in fires are cheaper to buy but cost more to run.
- Bottled gas fires and paraffin heaters are expensive to use and will create moisture when in use which can cause condensation. They may also be a safety hazard under some circumstances. It is important to provide ventilation to rooms where these types of heater are used.

Saving with insulation

- Most of the money you spend on fuel goes on heating, either for your home or hot water. Heat escapes through the loft and outside walls. Heat can also escape through cracks and gaps between the doors, floors and windows. It can be quite cheap to block or fill up these gaps. But remember if you are using fuel-burning appliances e.g. gas, oil or solid fuel, they need fresh air to work properly and safely, so do not block air vents.
- You also need ventilation in your kitchen and bathroom to avoid condensation. Too much condensation can lead to mould growth on your walls, windows, furnishings and clothing.
- If your home has cavity walls, then one of the best and most effective ways to keep your home warm is to have cavity wall insulation installed. If you aren't sure if you have cavity walls ask for help from the energy adviser or housing officer.
- If you have a loft in your home make sure it has been properly insulated (this is one of the best ways of keeping the heat in). The recommended thickness for insulation is 270mm and it can be done either by professional installers or as a DIY job.
- Also if there are hot and cold water pipes or tanks in the loft make sure that they have been lagged to stop them freezing and to cut down the cost of hot water.
- Outside doors and windows can be draught proofed. Energy efficiency improvements will also benefit the property by reducing dampness and therefore future maintenance costs (discuss this with your landlord if you are a tenant).
- Gaps between your floorboards and between floorboards and skirting boards can be filled up with beading, mastic or plastic wood.
- It's a good idea to block off any chimneys you don't use; this stops heat going up them and cold draughts coming down. But don't forget to put air grilles in them to avoid condensation and to provide ventilation for fuel-burning heaters e.g. gas, oil and solid-fuel (consult your landlord where appropriate).
- Double glazing is expensive, but secondary glazing material is available from DIY stores.
- A free way of saving fuel is to close your curtains at dusk and don't let the curtains hang in front of the radiator, tuck them behind to let the heat into the room, not out through the glass in the window.

Energy Saving Advice

Hot water savings

- If you have a hot water tank make sure your tank has insulation or has a jacket and that the pipes are lagged. This can save you up to a third of the cost of water heating (some homes do not have hot water tanks).
- For most people setting the hot water thermostat to 60°C is about right. Why heat water that you need to cool down? Do not set the temperature below 60°C as this may cause health problems.
- In one day a dripping hot water tap could waste enough water to fill a bath and you're paying to heat that water, so make sure dripping taps are fixed quickly and always turn hot water taps off properly.
- If you can take a shower instead of a bath you will save money as there is much less water to heat. If you don't have a shower installed try using a mixer unit that attaches to your bath taps.

Savings in the kitchen

- If your freezer has empty space, fill it with plastic freezer bags filled with balls of newspaper.
- When you're putting things in or taking things out of a fridge or freezer don't leave the door open unnecessarily.
- Never put hot or warm food straight into a fridge or freezer, it could be a health risk and leads to a build up of ice, which makes the appliance more costly to run.
- Regular defrosting keeps fridges and freezers running efficiently and running costs low.
- Make sure the seal around the doors of fridges, freezers and ovens have not perished. They are cheap to replace.
- Try to cook more efficiently, use the toaster instead of the grill, or the microwave instead of a conventional oven.
- Choose the right size pan – the base should just cover the ring of an electric cooker. If using gas the flames should never come round the side of the pan.

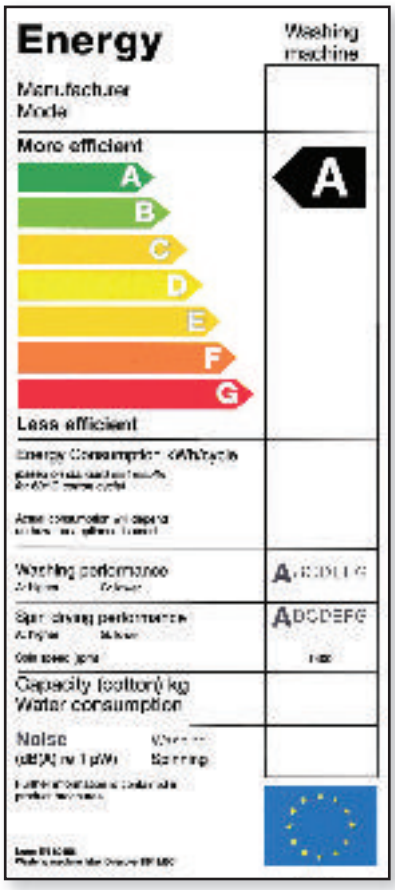
- Put lids on pans and turn down the heat when the food starts to boil.
- Use only enough water to cover food being cooked. Using more water than you need, or over-cooking, wastes energy and spoils food.
- Cut food up into small pieces, it cooks more quickly that way.
- Using a kettle, don't over-fill it – but be sure to cover the elements of an electric kettle.
- When doing the washing, always have a full load. If this is impossible then programme your machine to wash on a half load or economy wash.
- Try to dry your clothes outdoors; a dry, windy day is best. If you have to dry them indoors, dry them in the bathroom or kitchen with the window open and the internal door closed.

Lighting

- Use energy saving light bulbs; they last up to ten times longer than the old incandescent bulbs and could save you around £55 over the life of the bulb.
- Don't leave lights on unnecessarily; turn them off when leaving a room.

Appliances

- All electrical appliances have an energy rating that is used to work out its running costs.
- Manufacturers of fridges, freezers, lamps, washer dryers, dishwashers and washing machines are required to provide information on how much energy each machine uses.
- Washing clothes at 30°C uses less electricity than higher temperatures.
- Energy labels provide a guide as to how energy efficient the appliance is.
- Appliances are rated on the scale of A+++ to G. When replacing appliances, the higher the rating the cheaper it is to run.
- Always look for the BEAB Mark of Safety when buying electrical appliances.
- Do not leave TVs etc on stand-by; switch them off when not in use.
- Following the manufacturer's recommendations on the use of appliances; incorrect use could use more energy and affect the life of the appliance.



Key points to remember:

- Ask a shop assistant to tell you about the running costs of the item(s) you are looking to buy or rent. Make sure you see the energy labels where possible and aim for the highest rated model (A+++, A++, A+ or A), it will save you money over time.
- Ask if the appliance has any energy efficient features e.g. half a grill or half a ring features on cookers or half-load features on washing machines.
- A fan-assisted oven needs little or no pre-heating before cooking and therefore is more economical.
- Always check the door seals on second hand fridges or freezers to check that they have not perished. Although try and avoid purchasing second hand appliances, often they are old and very inefficient. It could end up costing you a great deal of money to run compared with an A rated appliance. Ask your local Energy Efficiency Advice Centre about possible appliance exchange scheme.
- Always check for safety features and certificates or labels.
- Make sure that any second hand electrical appliances have had safety checks. Also make sure that flexes/cords or fittings are not damaged.
- If you have access to the internet, these and many more suggestions can be found on numerous websites including the Energy Saving Trust at www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

NEA
Campaigning for Warm Homes

Developed by NEA's Technical Team with the support of Swindon Brough Council. NEA website: www.nea.org.uk

This information about Energy Efficiency Advice is available on the Internet at www.swindon.gov.uk. It can be produced in a range of languages and formats (such as large print, Braille or other accessible formats) by contacting the Customer Services Department.

Tel: 01793 445500 Fax: 01793 463982 E-mail: customerservices@swindon.gov.uk

Energy Saving Trust Tel: 0800 512 012. Swindon Borough Council Home Energy Conservation Officer: 01793 466100 (Tue-Thur)

D12394/12 Designed and printed by The Hub 01793 463112