

**TOWN OF NORTH ATTLEBOROUGH
BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

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MEMO

DATE: Tuesday, September 30, 2008 3:18 PM

TO: Board of Selectmen
Health Agent
Fire Chief
Police Chief
Assistant to the Town Administrator

FROM: Mark C. Fisher, Town Administrator

RE: Information from NAED

As part of our effort to assist residents in facing the energy crisis, the NAED has supplied us with the attached suggestions for energy conservation.

TEN NO COST/LOW COST TIPS TO SAVE ON YOUR ENERGY BILL THIS WINTER

- 1) **Bundle up your home** - Hidden gaps and cracks in the home can add up to as much air-flow as an open window. The more heat that escapes, the more cold air gets in, causing your heating system to work harder, use more energy, and costing you energy \$\$'s. Start by sealing air leaks and pay special attention to your attic and basement, where the biggest gaps and cracks are often found. Weatherizing can be done economically using materials such as caulking, weatherstripping, and insulation...where needed.
- 2) **Put on a sweater and save a few dollars** - For every notch you raise the thermostat, your bill goes up by 3%. Try reducing the temperature if possible. Turning down the thermostat by 10 degrees at night or when the house is unoccupied can save as much as 20% of heating costs. Remember, small children and the elderly in particular may be vulnerable to problems at lower temperatures. Reduce the temperature gradually to give your body time to adjust to the new temperature level.
- 3) **Let the sunshine in** - Be sure to open draperies and blinds on sunny days to let the sunlight warm your home. But remember to close them at night and on overcast days.
- 4) **Don't light up the whole room** - Most of us know to turn off the lights when we leave a room. However even while in a room, if a small reading lamp can be used, just light up your area instead of the whole room. Of course also replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent (CFL's) can save \$30. to \$40. over the life of the bulb.
- 5) **Get a heating system tuneup** - A heating and cooling professional can perform an annual inspection and routine maintenance to make sure your furnace is operating at peak performance.
- 6) **Keep the damper closed on your fireplace when not in use** - If you keep the damper open, all the heat you are paying for is going right out the chimney. Remember if the damper is not closed; it's like having a window open in the middle of winter....a waste of energy, money and....brrrrrr.
- 7) **Reduce hot water temperature** - Set your water heater to the "normal" setting of 120 degrees, unless the owner's manual for your dishwasher requires a higher setting. Savings are 7-11% of water heating costs.
- 8) **Shorten showers** - Simply reducing that lingering time by a few minutes can save hundreds of gallons of hot water per month for a family of four. Showers account for 2/3 of your water heating costs. Cutting your showers in half can reduce hot water costs by 33%.
- 9) **Discontinue the use of that older second refrigerator** - Got an old beer fridge in the basement? Unplug it and make the trek upstairs to your kitchen refrigerator. It will be good for your heart and your energy bill.
- 10) **Make use of your oven's leftover heat** - An oven will keep its heat for about 15 - 20 minutes after it is turned off. Use this heat to keep things such as second courses, desserts, or anything else that may need to be kept warm.

Tips on Weatherstripping

Warmed or air-conditioned air mixes with outside air through gaps in your home's thermal envelope—exterior walls, windows, doors, the roof, and the floors. These kinds of air leaks can waste large amounts of energy. Weatherstripping and caulking is an effective way to rid your home of costly drafts, saving you energy and money.

Most experts agree that the time and money invested in weatherstripping and caulking windows and doors can pay off faster than almost any other home improvement you can make, even when your home is well insulated. This tip sheet will focus on weatherstripping in particular.

Besides keeping out moisture, wind, and hot or cold air, weatherstripping will block entry of dust and noise, resulting in a cleaner, quieter home. Both weatherstripping and caulking are economical and, usually do-it-yourself jobs.

Loose fitting windows should be weatherstripped to keep warm air from escaping and make you feel more comfortable. The most vulnerable windows are swinging windows, and double hung windows. Some effective types of weatherstripping are spring-plastic, metal-backed vinyl and adhesive-backed foam.

Weatherstripping around exterior doors can be checked with a flashlight. From outside the closed door, move the flashlight slowly around the door edge. A "helper" inside the house can see the light shining in where weatherstripping is needed.

To determine how much weatherstripping is needed, add the perimeters of all windows and doors to be weatherstripped. Then add about 5-10 percent to accommodate any waste. Also take into consideration that weatherstripping comes in varying depths and widths.

Weatherstripping supplies and techniques range from simple to the technical. Consult the instructions on the weatherstripping package. Here are a few basic guidelines:

- ✓ *Weatherstripping should be applied to clean, dry surfaces in temperatures above 20 degrees F.*
- ✓ *Measure the area to be weatherstripped twice before you cut anything.*
- ✓ *Apply weatherstripping snugly against both surfaces. The material should compress when the window or door is shut.*

Brought to you by North Attleborough Electric Department



For more information on Energy Conservation, please call the Energy Hotline at: 1-888-772-4242.

Refrigerators & Freezers – Tips and Facts

Two major appliances with a voracious appetite for power are the refrigerator and the freezer. Refrigerators are power pigs, "scarfing" up to 7% of your electric bill and freezers are among the most significant energy-consuming appliances in the average home. In most cases only space conditioning (heating and cooling) and water heating use more energy. While most people are aware of the importance of saving energy on heating, cooling, and water heating, the energy consumed by refrigerators and freezers is often overlooked.

How much is that 6-Pack costing you? If you have a second refrigerator in your garage or basement it's probably costing more than you think...as much as \$100 per year! That's a stiff price to pay to keep a few beverages cool.

The temperature of the air around a refrigerator significantly affects its energy usage. Don't keep a refrigerator in the garage, near heat sources such as ranges, stoves or dishwashers or in direct sunlight. A refrigerator or freezer located in a garage or area where temperatures reach 90° F or higher can use a significant amount of energy – as much as 45-50% more. Give a refrigerator space and allow for good air circulation around the coils.

Likewise, if ambient air temperature drops below about 40 degrees Fahrenheit, the thermostat on the refrigerator may not run its cooling and defrost cycles for the appropriate amount of time. And refrigerators are not designed to heat their interiors, so placing a refrigerator in an environment that is below freezing may result in the freezing of your foods.

As with refrigerators, the garage is a bad place to keep a freezer because they use a significant amount of energy in rooms with temperatures at or above 90° F. Because of less thermal spillage and better insulation, chest freezers do use less energy than upright models.

Refrigerator Maintenance - Because these appliances run every day, small steps taken to improve their efficiency can leap into giant savings over the course of a year:

- **Prolong the life of the refrigerator gasket sealing by wiping it regularly with warm water. Once the gasket starts deteriorating, you're in for a big waste of energy and money. Test the quality of the seal by closing the door on a sheet of paper. The sheet should be firmly anchored. Repeat the test along the length of the gasket. Adjust the door hinges or replace the gasket if the seal is bad.**
- **A dusty condenser coil reduces a refrigerator's efficiency and shortens its life. Clean it several times a year with a coil brush or a soft bristle attachment on a canister-style vacuum cleaner. Unplug the refrigerator first. Cleaning coils regularly will help your refrigerator run more smoothly, which means lower energy usage.**
- **Always follow the manufacturer's recommendations, and disconnect the power before performing ANY maintenance on your refrigerator.**

Facts to Consider - A ten year-old refrigerator or freezer can cost considerably more to operate than a new energy-efficient model of the same size. Improvements in the design of compressors and cooling coils, better insulation, tighter door seals, and other design improvements all contribute to the higher efficiencies of newer

Energy Star qualified refrigerators and freezers provide energy savings without sacrificing the features you want. When considering the purchase of a new refrigerator or freezer, look for the **Energy Star** label. It looks like this:



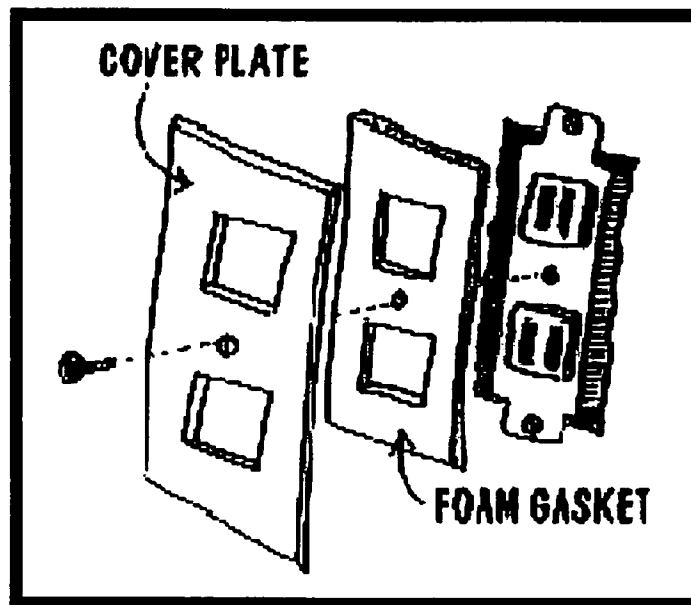
The **Energy Star** label is designed to help consumers identify appliances that have been rated by the federal government as the most energy-efficient products on the market. Appliances with an **Energy Star** label exceed existing federal efficiency standards, typically by 13% to 20%, and as much as 110% for some appliances.

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Button Up with Switch and Outlet Gaskets

Wall openings around outlets and switches are prime places for outside air to leak into your home. By adding foam gaskets behind outlet covers and switch plates and using safety plugs in all unused outlets, drafts will be kept to a minimum. In combination with other actions around the house such as caulking and weather-stripping, you could save up to 10 percent on energy costs. Switch and outlet gaskets can be found at home centers and electrical supply houses. Foam gaskets are installed directly over the plug or switch, below the finish trim plate. Here are *six easy steps* to install foam switch and outlet gaskets:

- First shut off power at the fuse box or circuit panel.
- Use a screwdriver to remove the screws holding the cover to the wall.
- Put the screwdriver down and install the gaskets.
- Remove the gasket center at the perforations and put the gasket in place.
- Reinstall the switch plate cover and put screw(s) securely in place.
- Once completed the power at the fuse box or circuit panel can be turned back on.



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For more information call the Energy New England Energy Hotline at: 1-888-772-4242

How to be "Fridge" Frugal

Refrigerators use seven percent of the nation's electricity, the equivalent of more than 50 percent of the power generated by all U.S. nuclear power plants. Chances are your refrigerator is using more electricity than any other appliance in the kitchen and accounts for about 25% of your electric bill. Here are some ways to help you use it efficiently:

Refrigerator Coils

The condenser coils help it dissipate heat from the food compartment. When dust, dirt or pet hair collect on the coils, they don't work as efficiently and the refrigerator uses more energy to power the motor. This could cause the refrigerator to run continuously or it may stop completely as a result of an overheated compressor. Keep condenser coils clean and unobstructed for maximum energy savings.

At least once every six months carefully clean the condenser coils of your refrigerator using either a long handled brush or the crevice tool attachment of the vacuum cleaner. The coils are located either behind or beneath the refrigerator.

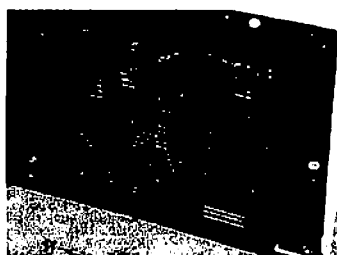
IMPORTANT: Before cleaning the condenser coils, unplug the refrigerator to avoid a shock hazard **AND** remember to plug in and turn on the refrigerator once you have finished.

To clean refrigerators with coils located underneath, remove the kick plate/grill at the floor on the front of the refrigerator by pulling on it firmly. Behind this grill dust covers the refrigerator coils, which extend back under the refrigerator. First use the



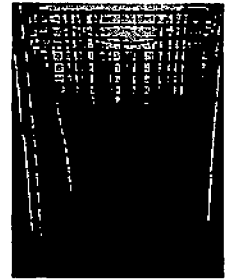
brush to loosen the dirt on the coils by rubbing it gently under the refrigerator and brushing back and forth until you can see the metal coils underneath the dirt. Using a vacuum cleaner attachment, vacuum up the resulting dust bunnies. Replace the grill when you're finished.

Replacing the grill is usually easier if you open the refrigerator door so you can see the slots the grill fits into.



If you have coils under your refrigerator, don't forget to clean off the fan grill as well. This grill can be found behind the refrigerator. Slide the refrigerator out from the wall until you can squeeze in there with a vacuum cleaner attachment. Be careful not to scratch the floor under the refrigerator.

Some refrigerators have coils in the back. Slide the refrigerator carefully out from the wall until you can reach the coils. Clean them completely with the vacuum cleaner's dusting attachment, then slide the refrigerator back into place.



Refrigerator coils are fragile! Be careful when cleaning or moving the refrigerator not to dent or damage them. Don't use a sharp instrument that might puncture the coils. Refrigerators are heavy, never tip one forward or backward, and do not attempt to move a refrigerator without help.

Gaskets

Check the gasket (rubber seal) around the door for cracks and dried-on food. To test the seal: close the door on a sheet of paper and try to pull the paper out. If it slides out easily, cold air is escaping from the compartment. Adjust or replace the seal.

More is Better

A full refrigerator uses less energy than an empty one. For efficient chilling, keep your refrigerator and freezer as full as possible, and remove things stored on top of it.

Energy Star

Consider replacing that old refrigerator. A refrigerator made before 1993 could be costing \$140 a year in electricity. Even those refrigerators built between 1993 and 2001 cost about \$60 a year to run. A new *Energy Star* rated model runs on about \$20 worth of electricity. A new refrigerator will last for decades and could pay for itself in less than five years.

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For more information call the Energy New England Hotline at: 1-888-772-4242