

Georgia Power offers energy-savings tips for the winter

ATLANTA – The temperatures outside already are cooling down. Now is the best time to start thinking about ways to save on your energy bill.

To keep warm and cut down your energy use, try these helpful energy-saving tips around your house all winter.

- **Wrap water pipes.** This will reduce heat loss from your hot water lines and help to prevent your pipes from freezing. The best type of wrap to use is "foam pipe wrap" that you can find at hardware stores for an inexpensive price.
- **Caulk or re-caulk around windows and doors.** This helps keep the cold out and the heat in. If your caulking is cracked, remove it and reseal with new caulk.
- **Change your air filters.** This should be done every month or so to help your unit's air exchange and indoor air quality. Dirty filters can increase your system's operating costs, damage equipment and reduce efficiency.
- **Have your heating or cooling system professionally checked to make sure it is running properly.** This can prolong the life of your system, as well as reduce operating costs.
- **Insulate your water heater with at least R-6 insulation.** Read your water heater manufacturer's warranty to make sure it's not voided by adding a water heater jacket. Do not cover the pressure release valve when you wrap the water heater.
- **Check weather stripping around doors, windows and between heated and unheated areas of your home – such as garages, basements, attics, etc.** A good check to see if stripping needs changing: close your door; if you see light coming through, the stripping needs changing.
- **If you have a gas heater or furnace, make sure you get a carbon monoxide detector before using the unit.**
- **Also make sure your pilot light (gas furnace) is lighted before the winter season starts.** If you are not sure about lighting it yourself, call a heating and cooling professional to do it.
- **Keep the thermostat on your heating system at the lowest comfortable setting.** Georgia Power recommends 68 degrees Fahrenheit. On the average, you add five percent to the operating time of your heating system for every degree it's set above 68.
- **If you are going away for several days, lower the thermostat to 60 degrees, but not to "off."** By setting the thermostat at 60, there will be less strain on your heating system when you return and it's time to reheat the house. Also, having some heat in the house will prevent damage, such as frozen or burst water pipes, from outside freezing temperatures.
- **Keep heating vents and registers clear.** Make sure they are not blocked by draperies or furniture. The vents should also be cleaned regularly with a vacuum or broom.
- **Let the sun shine in.** On sunny days, open drapes or blinds to allow natural solar heat to warm the house. Keep drapes and blinds closed on cloudy days and at night. Use insulated or heavy curtains on windows facing the north side of the house.

- **Make sure fireplace dampers fit tightly, and keep them closed when not using the fireplace.** Add a glass fireplace screen, if possible.
- **Cover bare floors.** Carpeting adds to comfort and heat retention, especially if there is little or no floor insulation.
- **Use a humidifier to keep your home more comfortable.** Adding moisture allows you to reduce the thermostat setting without feeling colder.
- **Reverse the direction of your ceiling fans to help maintain a comfortable temperature in your home.** Check the switch located on your ceiling fan or refer to your owner's manual for the proper direction of rotation.
- **If you have a window air conditioning unit, remove it for the winter months to prevent heat from escaping through and around the unit.** If it can't be moved, put a cover over it to prevent drafts.
- **Check the R-value of insulation in your home.** For existing homes, Georgia Power recommends R-30 in the ceiling, R-13 in the walls and R-11 in the floor for maximum comfort and energy efficiency. R-value is a measure of resistance to heat flow.

For more information on how to save energy, contact your local Georgia Power office, visit the Georgia Power web site at www.georgiapower.com, or call Georgia Power at 1-800-524-2421.