

GET ORGANIZED FOR WINTER

You are lounging on the sofa in your new home watching *Desperate Housewives*. You feel a slight chill which makes you realize that the time to fire up the furnace and seeing what it's made of is fast approaching. Preparing for the upcoming cold season by winterizing your home is not only a smart way to save money but it can be easier and more cost efficient than you might think. Get organized and follow these tips to ensure optimal energy efficiency in your new house this winter.

Did you say free? Here are a few ideas that won't cost you a penny.

Sun facing windows: Before you leave for the day, open your blinds and let the sun naturally reduce your heating bill.

Close completely: Don't assume windows are closed, be sure to use the locking mechanism to reduce heat loss.
Chimney flue: When you are not using your fireplace make sure the chimney flue is closed.

Of course older homes are more prone to drafts but don't be fooled that your new home doesn't require inspection. Here are some common areas to check and other simple measures you can implement to keep your home nice and toasty.

Caulking: Inspect all doors and windows to see if re-caulking is necessary. You can also use temporary caulking that peels away easily when spring arrives.

Weather stripping: An easy and affordable way to seal cracks. Stop by your local hardware shop for complete door and window kits.

Electrical sockets: Feel around the socket plates for drafts. Unscrew the plastic plate to see if there is an insulation pad inside. These pads are cheap and all you need is a screwdriver to get the job done.

Programmable thermostat: An invaluable tool to keep your home cooler at night and warm when you wake up. Jot down the make and model of your furnace and head to your local hardware store to find a compatible match.

If you are building your new home, consider contacting the Office of Energy Efficiency at the Government of Canada. Experts can inspect your building plans and make recommendations to make your home as energy efficient as possible, resulting in lower energy bills down the road. If you think you have a draft issue in your home there are many professionals that can conduct tests throughout your home to locate the problem areas. By taking a couple easy steps now to winterize your home you will not only be warmer but you'll have a bit more spending money over the holidays!