



## **Energy City Insights – Winter Energy Savings**

The winter months can take a toll on your energy consumption and as a result, your wallet! It's likely your furnace runs more to keep you warm, lights are on more often with less daylight hours, and some households utilize space heaters or electric blankets to combat the coldest winter days. There are a few simple ways to reduce your energy demand without sacrificing comfort, however.

### **Utilize natural light but keep the cold out.**

Open your curtains and blinds during the day to allow sunlight to naturally warm your home. Minnesota is gaining about three minutes of daylight per day in February. That might seem minimal but by the end of the month, we will gain over an hour of daylight. Be sure to close your blinds at night, as windows can also be a source of heat loss.

### **Make the most of a smart thermostat or consider upgrading.**

The biggest consumer of energy in your home this time of year is for heating. Lowering your thermostat even a couple degrees can have significant cost savings. Smart or WiFi enabled thermostats can help you make simple adjustments. These programmable thermostats can automatically adjust temps while you are sleeping or away from home, and they also give you the ability to make adjustments from your phone or smart device. Elk River Municipal Utilities also offers rebates for WiFi-compatible thermostats. [Check their website for more info.](#)

### **Safely use a space heater to warm a specific area.**

Have one room in the house that's always colder than the others? Consider using a space heater in that area, rather than increasing the temperature for the entire house. This can be more efficient and cost-effective especially for a basement or bathroom that just never gets quite warm enough. Be sure the space heater has overheat protection which will automatically turn the heater off if it tips over or gets too warm.

### **Keep the heat inside your home and avoid leaking heat out.**

Drafty doors and windows can release a significant amount of heat from your home. Consider adding weather-stripping around windows and doorframes. Caulking leaks can save an average of 10-20% annually in both heating and cooling bills. Make sure your furnace is running efficiently too – clean filters and regular tune-ups can make a big difference. Also, try leaving the oven door ajar once you're done cooking, don't let that little bit of heat go to waste!