

## Heat/electricity is included in my rent, so what should I do to be sure that I won't lose service?

Be sure to ask your landlord questions about what is included in your rent and what to do if service is affected. This is particularly important if you can't reach your landlord during regular or non regular hours. Protect yourself. Have backup contact information, and make certain that the process works. If you are unable to reach your landlord and anticipate problems, you should contact the Rentalsman. The Rentalsman is a government official responsible for protecting the rights of tenants and landlords. You can find contact information for the Rentalsman in your area by calling 1-888-762-8600.

Due to privacy laws, your utility cannot discuss the account of your landlord.

And remember, the first point of contact if you are having difficulty paying your electricity bill should always be your utility. They are here to help, and work with you in finding a solution to your challenges this winter heating season.

NB Power: 1-800-663-6272 or [www.nbpower.com](http://www.nbpower.com)

Saint John Energy: (506) 658-5252 or [sjenergy.com](http://sjenergy.com)

Edmundston Energy: (506) 739-2119

Perth-Andover Electric Light Commission: (506) 273-4959



## Top 10 energy saving tips

- 1 Install and set a programmable thermostat. This can save two per cent on the heating bill for every 1 degree C that a thermostat is turned down at night. Even without a programmable version, turn thermostats down at night and when away for long periods throughout the day.
- 2 Take care of leaks. Use plastic window kits to reduce heat loss and drafts. Use weather-stripping, caulking, and expanding foam to seal areas where there is air leakage.
- 3 Keep baseboard heaters and radiators clean and make sure they are not blocked by furniture, carpeting, or drapes. Turn electric baseboard heaters off at the electrical panel at the end of the heating season.
- 4 When adjusting your thermostat remember that the house will not warm up or cool down faster if you adjust the thermostat past the desired temperature.
- 5 Open drapes and curtains during the day to make use of the heat provided by the sunlight. Closing drapes and curtains at night will help to insulate the windows.
- 6 Change or clean the furnace filter. A dusty filter means the furnace is working harder to circulate heated air.
- 7 Wash and rinse clothes in cold water and air-dry your clothes whenever possible. Each load of laundry using cold water can reduce the energy used by 90 per cent. Line drying will save money and make clothes last longer.
- 8 If possible, unplug home electronics. Computers, televisions and other home electronics continue to use electricity even when turned off. This is known as standby power losses. Be sure to also unplug old, empty refrigerators and freezers.
- 9 Avoid having the refrigerator door open more than necessary to prevent cool air from spilling out into the room. This will also keep the temperature in the refrigerator cooler and will retain the cold in the refrigerator. Also check the gaskets on your refrigerator and deep freeze from time to time.
- 10 Use ENERGY STAR-rated compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) and always look for the ENERGY STAR symbol. ENERGY STAR-rated compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) use up to 75 per cent less energy and last up to 10 times longer than traditional light bulbs.

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# Facts & Tips on Winter Heating



Rising costs are a concern for many New Brunswickers. Recognizing the challenges we will face this winter heating season, your government has put a variety of programs in place to help people reduce their heating costs and work with their utilities to help find solutions to assist them in meeting their heating bill payments.

In order for a utility to provide assistance, it is essential that you contact them and discuss your current financial situation. With this information, they can work with you to find a solution.

The following frequently asked questions will serve as a guide to the options available during this winter heating season.

### **Can I get help paying my heating bills?**

Although it is an individual's responsibility to pay his or her electricity bill, there are a number of programs available that may assist in reducing bills or provide assistance if you are in financial need.

Efficiency New Brunswick, the government's energy efficiency agency, provides incentives to improve the energy efficiency of your home and reduce your heating costs. All New Brunswickers are eligible for a program in which up to 20% of the cost of upgrading your home will be covered by government. For more information, contact *Efficiency NB* at 1-866-643-8833 or [www.energycynb.ca](http://www.energycynb.ca).

If you are having trouble paying your bills due to a legitimate economic need, the Department of Social Development offers financial assistance programs to help eligible low-income individuals and households meet the cost of their winter heating requirements. For more information, contact your nearest Department of Social Development regional office:

**1-833-SDDStel (1-833-733-7835)**

Local governments and some not-for-profit groups may also provide assistance with budgeting tips, advice on how to use less energy or in some cases they may have emergency funds available, to help those at risk.

### **What if I can afford to pay more in the summer, but can't afford my whole bill in winter?**

Your utility can help you work within your personal financial situation to find ways to pay your electricity bill. You might be able to spread or level out your payments throughout the year. An equalized payment plan may offer you the predictability that will help you budget, particularly during the colder months.

### **During the winter months, my heating bills increase and I can't afford to pay them. What can I do?**

The first step is to contact your utility or service provider. Organizations are sensitive to these difficult times, and their representatives will work with you. It is very important that you discuss the status of your account and your current financial status so that they can provide options and advice. You can reduce your bills by learning some easy ways to decrease the amount of energy you use. Many ideas do not cost any money. For example, by reducing the temperature at night you can save money and you will sleep better. Others cost very little to implement. For example, plastic sheet window kits, available at local hardware stores, help keep drafts out and heat in. In addition to offering tips, utilities will work with you on a payment plan.

The government maintains a policy on winter disconnections, which was first announced in 2006. This policy is in effect from the beginning of November until the end of April, and provided that you are in legitimate economic need, you have contacted your utility to discuss your account, and that you continue to make mutually-agreed-upon payments on your outstanding balance, your power will not be disconnected. This winter disconnection policy does not mean you do not have to pay your electricity bills. Payment remains your responsibility.

Most importantly though, if you are having difficulty paying your bills, it is essential that your utility know and understand your personal situation. Their agents are trained to work with you, make recommendations, and provide advice with respect to your account and how you can reduce your bill. If they don't know that you have a problem they can't help you.

### **Can I be disconnected in the winter?**

Disconnection at any time is a last resort for your utility. Under government's winter disconnection policy, your power will not be disconnected in winter, provided that you are in legitimate economic need, you have contacted your utility to discuss your account, and that you continue to make mutually-agreed-upon payments on your outstanding balance. This winter disconnection policy does not mean you do not have to pay your electricity bills. Payment remains your responsibility. It is critical that customers communicate regularly with their utility about their account.

It is essential for you to notify your utility if you experience difficulty keeping your payment arrangement. Both your utility and government agencies can provide tips on how to reduce your energy consumption. There are also government and non-government agencies that may be able to help. However, no one will be able to assist you if they do not know you are in need.

### **What if there's a month when I can't afford to pay my whole bill or if I have an overdue account?**

Call your utility immediately and let them know. The utility will work with you to offer solutions to help you manage your electricity consumption and your power bill. Its agents will work with you to develop a mutually agreeable payment plan that will enable you to pay overdue amounts over time, as well as keep up with ongoing bills.

### **What should I do if my utility sends me a disconnect notice?**

Call your utility immediately! Contacting your utility is essential to resolve the situation or you will be disconnected. Disconnection at any time is always a last resort and your utility is unlikely to disconnect you if you remain in contact with them, make mutually-agreed-upon payment arrangements and if you continue to make payments towards your unpaid balance. Staying in contact with your utility is very important. Your utility needs to understand your current financial situation. This is very important, because disconnect notices are based on customer payment history. Customers are subject to disconnection for non-payment when the terms and conditions outlined on the back of your monthly bill are not met. Staying in touch with your utility is critical.

