

How to save Fuel out in Rural areas

People who live in rural Alaska have unique problems when it comes to conserving fuel. The methods appropriate for the residents of Chigago just won't work for the villages of Alaska. With this in mind the Alaska Energy Office offers the following conservation suggestions that will save energy and money, using the resources usually available.

These measures can be followed if a village's fuel supply is late in arriving, or if a supply is running low for some reason, or if a rural Alaskan would just like to save some of his energy dollars. In many villages where the cost of fuel is \$1.50, \$2.00 and up per gallon, the savings from conserving fuel can be substantial.

Following these conservation tips can save 20% of your heating bill, or more, depending on the weather factors and home construction:

You can save a lot of heat by banking or skirting your house by enclosing the open space between your house and the ground. Blocks of tundra are a very good insulator. Stack them up around your house so cold air will not seep up through your floors.

Sacks filled with dirt will also help, and then nailing tar paper or plastic to the bottom of your house, draping it to the ground and holding it down with rocks, bricks or snow. Snow and ice can help with insulation.

Shovel snow over the sacks or tar paper to fill in air spaces and it will help keep heat in and cold winds out. However you can, block off that open space under your homes and the fuel savings will mount up fast.

Close off any rooms that are not absolutely needed. To close off rooms or extra outside doors, fill cracks around edge of doors with folded newspapers or cloth. Tack on plastic screen if you have any visqueen or similar material.

Windows cause a major loss of heat. Extra windows should be blocked off with wood over newspapers or cloth.

Another way to close off windows is to glue four layers of cardboard together and place it over the window from the inside, making it large enough to be tacked to the window frame. Put wadded up newspapers between the window and the cardboard, then glue aluminum foil on the side facing the inside of your room, with the shiny side facing the room.

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This will reflect the heat away from the window and into your room. If you are going to close off a room, be sure to close off any windows first.

For any windows left uncovered for needed light make sure all cracks are sealed with weatherstripping, old cloth or newspapers. You can tell easily if you are losing heat through heat through your windows or door frames by feeling the cold air with your hand.

"Felt Hair" weather stripping is cheap and works well to stop cold air leaks.

Old wool blankets used as curtains or any thick material that air cannot pass through should be used on any open windows. These curtains should be light colored to reflect more heat back into your house.

The curtain must be tight at the top and the sides. If you already have a curtain make sure it is tight around the sides and top and if it isn't you can tack down the sides and make a tight cap for the top. The cap can be a piece of material tacked to the window frame several inches above the curtain.

Drape it over the top and tack down on the sides with no ruffles. Make sure this insulator is put to full use by closing off your curtains at night or during your dark hours. Your uncovered windows that are not letting in light are robbing you of precious heat and fuel.

By closing off these cracks around doors and windows and covering your floors with rugs for warmth, where possible, you can save up to 20% of your heating bill.

Save your old newspapers and magazines and make use of them if you have a stove that can burn wood or paper. Make paper logs by rolling them up and tying them with string and then soaking them in water. After you dry them by your heat source, these "paper logs" will burn like wood.

For more tips on conserving energy write to the Alaska Energy Office, 5th floor, 338 Denali Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99501.