

*Iowa Utilities Board***NEWS***Elizabeth S. Jacobs, Chair**Nick Wagner, Board Member**Sheila K. Tipton, Board Member***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** January 6, 2015**Contact** | Rob Hillesland, 515.725.7322, rob.hillesland@iub.iowa.gov **Web site** | <http://iub.iowa.gov>

Iowa Utilities Board reminds consumers of economical, safe ways to reduce winter energy bills

(Des Moines) – With Iowa enduring dangerously low temperatures this week, the Iowa Utilities Board reminds utility customers of safe ways to reduce monthly utility bills through several energy-saving methods.

Whenever possible, lower the thermostat. A programmable thermostat is the best option, is the most efficient, and can be easily installed. Never reduce the temperature to a setting that might adversely impact the health of anyone in the home. Lowering the temperature by a few degrees when sleeping and by several additional degrees when residents are away from home is recommended. To prevent water pipes from freezing, never set the temperature below 50 degrees Fahrenheit when a residence is unoccupied.

Other safe and efficient ways to reduce energy use and costs:

- *Inspect, clean, and change furnace filters regularly.*
- *Have heating systems serviced annually by a qualified professional.*
- *Ensure air registers, heating ducts, and radiators are clean and not blocked.*
- *Weatherize exterior windows and doors.*
- *Turn off lights, electronic devices, exhaust fans, and appliances when not in use.*
- *Turn off power strips when not using electronic equipment to reduce phantom energy use.*
- *Open or close window coverings to let in sunlight or insulate against cold and wind, especially at night.*
- *Replace inefficient light bulbs, windows, furnaces, water heaters, or other appliances. Ensure replacement items are Energy Star certified.*
- *Upgrade insulation in the attic, walls, floors, basement, or crawl spaces.*
- *Check with your local energy utility about a free or low-cost energy assessment. Many utilities also offer energy efficient programs or rebates for energy efficiency investments.*

(MORE)

- *Inquire with the local [Community Action Agency](#) (CAA) for eligibility requirements of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance and Home Weatherization Programs. These programs can provide certified applicants with limited financial assistance for winter heating, short-term protection from energy utility service disconnection, resources to improve home energy efficiency, consumer information about energy use, and proven means to reduce energy consumption.*

To keep your home safe this winter:

- *Never use a gas stove or oven for space heating.*
- *Never leave open burning fireplaces, candles, or active space heaters unattended.*
- *Always ensure adequate venting if you use a fireplace or wood burning stove.*
- *Never use portable combustion generators or engines indoors, which can be fatal due to carbon monoxide, fire, and other risks even when operating near open windows or doors.*
- *Indoor use is not recommended for gas or kerosene heaters, stoves, and grills.*

Contact your local natural gas or electric utility for more information about options to assist in lowering energy usage and saving money during the winter heating season and throughout the year.

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The Iowa Utilities Board regulates utilities to ensure that reasonably priced, reliable, environmentally responsible, and safe utility services are available to all Iowans.

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