

Get back energy savings – Set back your thermostat



What is a thermostat?

A thermostat is an on/off switch that tells your furnace to heat your home when the temperature drops below a set point. The thermostat's job is to maintain the temperature indoors within a narrow range. It works the same way for central air-conditioning in the summer.

Why should I set back my thermostat?

In the winter, you can save energy by setting back the temperature when you're asleep or not at home. For every 1 degree you lower the thermostat for 8 hours, you can save 1% on your heating bill. (Setting the temperature up for air-conditioning saves a similar percentage on cooling.) An average NorthWestern Energy customer can save \$40 to \$100 per heating season by using setbacks.

Recommended thermostat settings when you are home are 68° in the winter or 78° in the summer. When you're sleeping or not at home, set it at 60° in the winter or 85° in the summer. (Check with your doctor if you have a medical condition that requires different temperatures. If your home's pipes freeze during extremely cold weather, correct the problem before setting back the thermostat.)

Estimated Energy Savings

Savings are the same whether temperature is adjusted manually - by hand, or automatically - with a programmable thermostat.

| Set back degrees | 8 hours per day | 16 hours per day | 24 hours per day |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| 5° | 5% | 10% | 15% |
| 7° | 7% | 14% | 21% |
| 11° | 11% | 22% | 33% |
| 13° | 13% | 26% | 39% |

Myths

"It costs as much or more to heat a home after a setback, or to cool the house after a summer setup."

Fact: The longer your house remains at the lower temperature, the more heat you save. (If the average temperature difference between indoors and outdoors is smaller, less heat is needed.) If you were leaving for a week, you'd set back the temperature. So why not for shorter time periods?

"The house will warm up faster the higher the thermostat is raised."

Fact: The thermostat isn't like the gas pedal on a car. It's either calling for heat or not, so setting the thermostat too high may cause you to over-shoot the desired temperature.

"The kids will kick off the covers and get cold."

Fact: Children older than about two weeks can regulate their body temperature just like adults, so they don't need different temperatures than adults. If they kick off the covers, try dressing them in pajamas with feet or using a sleeping bag.

Manual set back

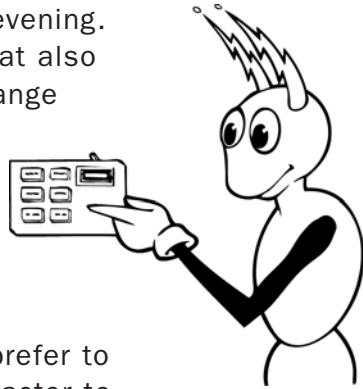
You can get the same savings adjusting the thermostat by hand, but it can be inconvenient. You may forget to change the temperature at bedtime or when leaving the house. Some people don't like waiting for the house to warm up after turning up the heat.

Programmable (automatic setback) thermostats

A programmable (automatic setback) thermostat offers comfort and convenience. It can turn on the heat before you get out of bed in

the morning or before you come home in the evening. A setback thermostat also never forgets to change the temperature.

Many people install thermostats themselves using the instructions that come with the thermostat. Some prefer to hire a heating contractor to do the installation.



If you are a NorthWestern Energy residential natural gas heating customer and you purchase and install an ENERGY STAR® programmable thermostat, you may qualify for a rebate up to \$40. Go to the *Energy Savings Center* at www.northwesternenergy.com for more details.

Where to buy

If you plan to install a programmable thermostat yourself, they are sold at hardware stores, home improvement stores and some discount stores. Typical prices are \$30 to \$100.

Features

Basic programmable thermostats have a different program for weekdays and weekends. More complex ones can have a different program for every day of the week. Consumer Reports reviews programmable thermostats every few years. Your local library can help you find the most recent article.

Special heating systems

Heat pumps, electric heaters and boilers may require special thermostats, so check for compatibility first.

When insulating or sealing air leaks in your home, be careful not to seal the home too tightly or you may cause health and safety problems. Never cover the attic ventilation soffits with insulation or plug the vents that bring fresh air to your natural gas appliances.

Tax credits may be available for making efficiency improvements in your home.

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for more energy saving tips and information about programs and services.**