SUSTAINABLE ENERGY IRELAND

Warmer
Homes Scheme

Warm up your home and cut your fuel bills!

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Introduction

Energy is vital to our daily lives. We need energy for electricity, heat and transport. At the moment, most of the energy we use comes from fossil fuels such as oil, gas, coal and peat. Unfortunately there is a limited supply of fossil fuels buried in the earth's crust and they are being used up at a faster and faster rate. These fuels also produce carbon dioxide, the greenhouse gas that is considered to be a major cause of climate change.

Energy is wasted in the home because our houses sometimes have poor insulation and inefficient heating systems and appliances. What's more, sometimes we use energy inefficiently; for example, by leaving things switched on when they're not needed or by using heating systems incorrectly.

If you find it difficult to afford to keep your home warm and comfortable or to pay the fuel and electricity bills, you could benefit from the assistance available through the Warmer Homes Scheme which is part-funded by Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI), Ireland's National Energy Authority.

This booklet gives a brief description of each measure and other things you can do to save energy and money and keep warm. At the back of this booklet you will find details of how to apply for help through the scheme.

The help available through the scheme includes:

- **Attic insulation**
- **Draught proofing**
- **Energy advice**
- **Hot water cylinder jacket**
- **Low energy light bulbs**

In certain parts of the country, cavity wall insulation is also available.

Insulation

Insulation helps keep your home warm in the same way that wearing a jacket or jumper helps to keep your body warm. If your home is often cold and hard to heat it may be poorly insulated. That means you could be losing heat through your attic, walls, windows and doors.

Helps you to keep in the heat and save money

Attic insulation

A lot of heat is lost through the roof. Attic insulation is the material that is laid in your attic to reduce this loss and keep your house warm. The two main types of attic insulation commonly used are mineral wool and glass wool.

It usually comes in long rolls that can be cut to size and laid down between the wooden joists in your attic.

If you have 50mm (2") or less of insulation in your attic, it can be topped up through this scheme to 200mm (8").

If you are eligible for assistance through this scheme, your local approved installer can check what level of insulation your attic currently has on your behalf. Please note that you may need to temporarily clear your attic of any stored items, before any work can be undertaken.

Acts like a jacket around your home

Wall insulation

Walls are also responsible for heat loss in your house and insulating them will help to keep the heat in. The type of insulation that can be used to insulate your walls depends on the way they have been built.

If your walls have a continuous cavity running within them, they may be suitable for cavity wall insulation. The material used is blown into the walls through a series of small holes which are closed up when the job has been completed. If you are not sure what kind of walls you have your local approved installer will advise.

Please note that cavity wall insulation is currently only available under the Warmer Homes Scheme in certain regions.

Draught proofing windows and doors

Windows and doors sometimes have small gaps in them that let in draughts, make you uncomfortable and waste energy.

If your windows and doors have air gaps around them, draught proofing materials can be fixed to them which will help stop unwanted draughts and to keep your home warmer and more comfortable.

Draught proofing is a relatively simple job that can be done with the minimum of disruption. However, not all windows and doors can be draught proofed; for example if there is a gas/open fire in the room, it **must not** be draught proofed for safety reasons. Also many modern windows and doors already have draught proofing built into them and cannot be draught proofed further.

Prevents unwanted draughts

Keeps your hot water warm for longer

Hot water cylinder insulation

If your hot water cylinder is not insulated, the water will cool down very quickly and it will cost you a lot to keep it hot.

Your hot water cylinder is normally located in the hot press and should be covered with a well fitting, 80mm (3") thick insulation jacket. These are usually green or red in colour. Newer cylinders may be pre-insulated with a semi-rigid foam coating. This will often be pale yellow or green in colour.

A jacket is simple to fit and will help to cut heat loss. You will still be able to air clothes in your hot press but the warmth from the cylinder will be released more slowly.

Low Energy Light Bulbs (also called compact fluorescent lamps or CFLs)

Low energy light bulbs use around one fifth of the electricity used by traditional light bulbs and can last up to fifteen times longer.

Use only one fifth of the energy used by normal light bulbs

They are ideal for locations in the house where a light bulb is left on for longer periods of time e.g. kitchen or living room. They can also be useful for people who have difficulty changing light bulbs as they rarely require replacement. They are more expensive than normal light bulbs, costing around €6 - €8 each, but will save this amount many times over their lifetime in reduced electricity costs. Low Energy Light Bulbs (CFLs) are available from most supermarkets and electrical shops.

They do differ a little from normal light bulbs. Firstly, they tend to be slightly larger and come in a variety of shapes. Secondly, they take a few minutes to reach full brightness so *initially* the light may be dimmer than what you are used to.

Energy Advice

Energy saving tips and advice to help you use energy wisely will be given to all householders receiving work through this scheme by the installer. Several publications offering more detailed advice about how to save energy and keep warm are available from SEI. For more information visit our website at **www.sei.ie**.

How to get help through the scheme

The Warmer Homes Scheme

SEI intends the scheme to reach the people who need it most. However, eligibility criteria are determined locally and can vary according to where you live. Check with your local approved installer (see back cover) or ring Eaga Partnership, the managing agent for the scheme on **042 935 2444** to find out whether you are eligible for help. In some parts of the country a small fee is charged for the work undertaken through the scheme. Further help may be available to householders that are unable to afford this fee. You should enquire with your local installer to check if this is the case.