

## Heating Up for Winter: Energy-Saving Tips for Businesses

The onset of winter is the perfect time to make sure your building is operating efficiently. These straightforward heating efficiency measures have the potential to save significant amounts of energy, leaving you with more money for your business while maintaining or improving occupant comfort.

**HVAC temperature setbacks.** Because HVAC systems account for a large amount of the energy consumed by businesses—space heating in particular accounts for more than 90 percent of natural gas use in retail buildings—adjusting temperature settings can be a source of substantial savings. In particular, it's a great idea to turn temperature settings down during unoccupied hours and on weekends during the winter. You can automate these settings with programmable thermostats or through a building automation system. You can also try implementing small temperature setbacks during working hours—a simple temperature change of 1° or 2° Fahrenheit will frequently go unnoticed by occupants.

**HVAC filters.** During the winter months, filters should be changed on a regular basis to make sure that the furnace fan isn't using more energy than necessary trying to push air through clogged filters. If you are located next to a highway, a construction site, or another place where the air is dirtier than usual, consider changing filters more often.

**Personal heaters.** Personal space heaters can consume a significant amount of energy, and they can pose a fire hazard if left on overnight. Over the course of an eight-hour workday, even a modestly sized space heater can use as much energy as a laptop does in a month. Because the cost of heating an area with a highly efficient, well-maintained HVAC system is usually much lower than relying on personal space heaters, the best approach is to maintain the HVAC system so that it provides adequate and evenly distributed heat, and to discourage employees from using space heaters if at all possible.

**Radiant heaters.** If you have facilities with large open spaces, consider installing gas or electric radiant heaters to reduce heating costs. These heaters primarily heat surfaces, rather than the surrounding air, and when mounted above work areas, they can keep employees comfortable even when ambient air temperature is as low as 40° to 50° Fahrenheit. The reduction in overall indoor air temperature can dramatically reduce energy consumption, sometimes by as

much as 50 percent.

**Weatherization.** Gaps and cracks in the exterior shell of a building can greatly increase the amount of energy needed for heating. Look for drafty or broken windows and gaps around frames, doors, and loading docks, and seal them whenever possible. Most air leaks around doors and windows can be easily sealed with weather stripping that is available at any local hardware store.

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