

WINTERIZING YOUR HOME

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO MAXIMIZE COMFORT AND SAVINGS IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA



As the crisp breeze of autumn heralds the arrival of winter in Northern Minnesota, it's essential to prepare your home for the frigid months ahead. Proper winterization not only ensures a warm and cozy living space but also significantly enhances energy efficiency, saving you money on utility bills. Here's a step-by-step guide tailored for residents in our area:

1. INSULATE WINDOWS AND DOORS:

Begin by inspecting windows and doors for gaps and cracks. Seal them with weatherstripping or caulk to prevent cold drafts from seeping in. Consider using heavy-duty curtains or thermal blinds to add an extra layer of insulation



2. CHECK HEATING SYSTEMS:

Before the temperature drops significantly, schedule a professional inspection of your heating system. Clean or replace filters, check for leaks, and ensure all components are functioning optimally. For homes with a fireplace, have the chimney cleaned and inspected to ensure safe and efficient operation.

3. SEAL ATTIC AND BASEMENT GAPS:

Inspect the attic and basement for any gaps or openings. Use expanding foam or caulk to seal these areas, preventing heat loss. Adequate insulation in these spaces is crucial for retaining indoor warmth.

4. PROTECT PIPES:

Frozen pipes are a common winter woe. Insulate pipes in unheated or vulnerable areas of your home. Additionally, during severe cold snaps, let faucets drip slightly to prevent freezing.

5. ROOF AND GUTTER MAINTENANCE:

Clear leaves, debris, and snow from your roof and gutters. Ice dams can form when melted snow refreezes at the edges of your roof, leading to potential water damage. Proper insulation and ventilation in the attic can also prevent ice dam formation.

6. LANDSCAPING PREP:

Trim tree branches that could potentially damage your home during winter storms. Clear pathways and driveways of debris to ensure easy snow removal and prevent accidents.

7. PREPARE EMERGENCY SUPPLIES:

Stock up on essential supplies such as flashlights, batteries, blankets, and non-perishable food items. Have a backup heating source like a generator or portable heater in case of power outages.



By following these steps, you're not only ensuring a warm and secure home but also contributing to the energy efficiency of your home. Stay warm and cozy throughout the winter months, knowing that your well-prepared home is ready to weather the chill of Northern Minnesota.

FOUR KEY FACTORS THAT IMPACT ENERGY BILLS

In a world where the cost of daily living seems to be on a constant rise, it's only natural to wonder what factors contribute to the fluctuations in electricity prices.

While there is no short answer, there are a few key elements that impact electricity prices and rates. Below is a summary of the four primary factors that impact your bill. While we can't control the weather or the rising costs of fuels, please know Arrowhead Cooperative works proactively to manage our system delivery costs.

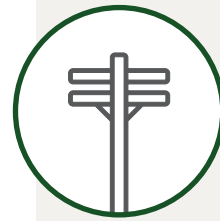
Additionally, members can manage their monthly electricity consumption. Your energy consumption directly influences your bill, as this covers the usage of appliances, heating/cooling, lighting, and electronic devices. We're here to help you, too by offering a variety of load management programs, rebates, and tips for saving energy and money.

Contact us if you have questions about your electric bill or for advice on how to start saving today.



VARYING FUEL COSTS

Fluctuating fuel prices significantly influence the operational costs of generating electricity. These fluctuations directly impact the cooperative's expenses, which, in turn, affect the electric rates imposed on our members' bills.



SYSTEM DELIVERY COSTS

Your bill includes a monthly Service Availability Charge, which recovers part of the co-op's ongoing investments in poles, wire, meters, system maintenance and additional costs to provide electric service regardless of the amount of energy you use.

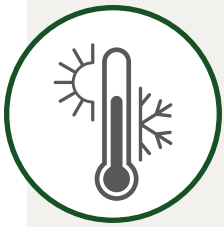


WARM HANDS & WARM HEARTS

Embrace the spirit of giving this winter season by joining Arrowhead Cooperative in their heartfelt initiative to collect cold-weather accessories and grocery store gift cards, ensuring our neighbors stay warm and cared for during the holidays. Arrowhead Cooperative is collecting cold-weather accessories (mittens, gloves, hats, and scarves) as well as gift cards to local grocery stores to help keep our neighbors warm this winter.

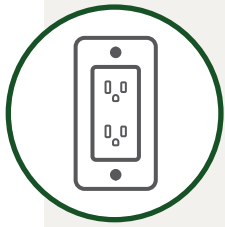
Contributions of **new or homemade** winter accessories can be brought to Arrowhead Cooperative's office by 4 pm on December 15. Operation Family Christmas coordinators will distribute your donations to those in need in our community.

Help us decorate our mitten tree with warmth, comfort, and cheer!



WEATHER AND TEMPERATURE

When temperatures soar or dip, your cooling or heating equipment must run longer and at maximum capacity, which can greatly increase your energy use. Extreme temperatures can also affect electricity market prices. When the need for electricity increases due to extreme heat or cold, the price of power typically rises.



ENERGY CONSUMPTION

This is the amount of electricity you use each month to power your home's cooling/heating system, appliances, lighting, electronics and more. The amount of electricity you consume is measured in kilowatt-hours (kWh). You have control over when and how much energy you use, which can ultimately help manage your monthly costs.

CO-OP NEWS

OFFICE CLOSED

Arrowhead Cooperative will be closed on Thursday, November 23, and Friday, November 24, 2023, in observance of Thanksgiving. In the event of an outage or emergency please call (800) 864-3744.

COLD WEATHER RULE REMINDER

Arrowhead Cooperative members who may have trouble paying their winter energy bills are reminded that the Cold Weather Rule took effect October 1, 2023.

The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule protects qualified residential utility customers during the winter months. Under this rule, electric service will not be disconnected from October 1 through April 30 due to non-payment, if customers meet Cold Weather Rule requirements. However, this rule does not relieve members of their responsibility to pay their utility bills.

Those who qualify for Cold Weather Rule protection need to set up a payment schedule with the Cooperative. Call us today for more information or to set up your payment arrangement at (800) 864-3744.

NEXT BOARD MEETING

Thursday, November 30, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.

LOOKING FOR A TAX BREAK?

With the start of another heating season, we would like to remind members who have electric heat as a primary heat source that their heat is exempt from Minnesota sales tax November through April.

The exemption only applies to electricity used as your primary fuel for residential heating. If you have two heat meters, only one heat meter is tax-exempt. Electricity from lights, appliances, etc. is not tax-exempt. Arrowhead Cooperative must charge sales tax unless we have a Sales Tax Exemption Certificate on file. If you sent in the form in the past you do NOT need to send it in again. We renew it automatically. If you find you qualify and are not sure if you have already submitted this certificate look under your rate on your bill. If it says "Winter Exempt" in your rate description then you are tax exempt.

ELECTRIC HEAT SALES TAX EXEMPTION CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the main source of heat for my home (over 50%) is furnished by permanently installed electric heating equipment and I, therefore, am eligible for the electric heating sales tax exemption, as provided by Minnesota state law. This is for the billing months of November through April only.

ACCOUNT #: _____

DATE: _____

MEMBER NAME: (please print) _____

MEMBER SIGNATURE: _____

SERVICE ADDRESS: _____

IS SOLAR RIGHT FOR YOU?

The benefits of installing solar panels may seem like a no brainer, but the reality is, not every home (and homeowner's situation) is right for solar. There are several factors to consider before pulling the trigger on a solar system, like determining if you receive enough sun to achieve your goals, finding the right contractor, negotiating contracts and other important details.

Investing in solar is a major decision. If you're considering solar, Arrowhead Cooperative has over 75 members with solar interconnected to its grid and can help. Here are questions to consider before installing solar.

- **WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?** If your primary goal is to save money on electric bills, an energy audit can identify areas of the home for improvement for maximum energy savings.
- **DO YOU HAVE AN AREA SUITABLE FOR SOLAR?** Consider how much sun (and shade) the location receives and if any trees will need to be removed. Solar panels perform best when facing south.
- **HOW LONG WILL I OWN THE HOME?** If you're considering solar, you're likely planning to stay in the home for several years. Carefully review the terms of your contract and what those mean if you decide to sell the property.
- **WHAT IS THE COST?** Purchasing a solar system is expensive. However, federal tax credits can help cover some of the costs for a new system, up to 30%. Regardless of how you decide to finance the solar system, make sure you get several quotes from qualified contractors.
- **DOES THE CONTRACT SEEM REASONABLE AND FAIR?** If you decide to hire a contractor, carefully read the fine print of the contract. Do the system performance calculations seem realistic? Does the project time frame sound reasonable? As part of the interconnection process, Arrowhead Cooperative will provide you with your home's energy use data.
- **HOW WILL I WORK WITH ARROWHEAD COOPERATIVE?** Finally, but equally important, you should contact the cooperative if you decide to install solar. If the system is connected to Arrowhead Cooperative's electric grid, you'll need to apply for interconnection. We can walk you through the steps, including our policies, prior to you signing any agreement with your contractor.

For many homeowners, solar panels are a great way to help the environment and save on electric bills—but there are many factors to consider before diving in and installing a system.



NOT SURE IF SOLAR IS RIGHT FOR YOUR PROPERTY, BUT STILL INTERESTED?

Arrowhead Cooperative owns a community solar array designed to make it easy and affordable for our members to support an alternative, environmentally friendly energy option. Arrowhead Cooperative members can participate by purchasing the output of one or more solar panels located in the array at Arrowhead Cooperative's office in Lutsen.

The energy produced from this project helps supply energy to our distribution system. While the energy created doesn't directly power your home, you will receive a credit on your energy bill based on the output of the system.



NOVEMBER CALENDAR WINNER

Submitted by: Michael Plumb



EFFICIENCY TIP

The holiday season is upon us, and that means we'll be using more energy in the kitchen! When possible, cook with smaller counter top appliances instead of the stove top or oven. Smaller appliances like slow cookers, air fryers and Instant Pots consume less energy. When using the oven or stove top, match the size of the pot to the heating element and place a lid over the pot while cooking. The food will cook faster, and you'll use less energy.

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