

November 2019 | Oregon

Keep your home cozy this winter with a high-efficiency natural gas fireplace



High-efficiency natural gas fireplaces are easy to operate, aesthetically pleasing and may lower your energy costs.

Our partner Energy Trust of Oregon offers cash incentives of up to \$250 for some high-efficiency natural gas fireplaces, as well as a variety of incentives for other energy-efficient home upgrades. Enjoy the convenience and warmth of a new natural gas fireplace this next heating season.

Find out more at energytrust.org/fireplace.



Cold weather and coffee

What happens when your home gets the chills

You may have noticed an increase in energy usage on your most recent bill.

We're often asked how energy use can increase when no changes have been made to a thermostat. It's a great question and one that can be explained by comparing our homes to a cup of coffee.

During hot summer months, when we take our cup of coffee outside, it remains warm for quite some time. When cold weather hits, that same cup of coffee cools down rather quickly. Just like our cup of coffee, our homes retain and release heat differently throughout the year. The more heat our homes release, the more energy it takes to warm them back up. A cup of coffee can be warmed up in a few seconds. A house, on the other hand, takes a bit more effort from its heating system — and more effort means more energy.

Just three days of temperatures 10-14 degrees below normal can cause our homes to use 25-50 percent more energy than usual. There are ways we can protect our home from getting the chills, though. Keep cold air out and warm air in by:

- Installing weather strip and caulking around windows and doors. A ¼ inch gap at the bottom of a door is equivalent to a softball sized hole in the wall.
- Closing the damper on the fireplace when not in use. This prevents up to 25 percent of our home's heat from escaping out the chimney.
- Close curtains and blinds when the sun isn't shining. Installing window plastic will also prevent cold air drafts.

Visit myavista.com/winterbill for additional tips on how to save energy and stay comfortable in your home this season.



It's holiday baking time!

Over the holidays, your oven can get a real workout. To help your oven operate efficiently and economically, follow these tips:

- Since it's a long, slow cook for turkey or holiday ham, there's no need to preheat your oven. Unless you're baking breads or pastries, you may not need to preheat at all.
- Don't open the oven door to take a peek at what's inside. Instead, turn on the oven light and check through the window.
- Cook several items at the same time, but make sure there's enough room for the heat to circulate.
- If you use glass or ceramic dishes, you can lower your oven temperature by 25 degrees and foods will cook just as quickly.
- For cooking on your stovetop, be sure to match the size of the pot or pan to the size of the burner, and always cover pots when cooking.

For more energy-saving tips, visit myavista.com/advice.



Holiday lights



Bright, twinkling lights are one of the joys of the season, whether on the eaves of your home or strung on trees.

While those merry little lights are a delight for many, incorrect usage can cause fires, injuries from falls or electrical shocks. To keep the holidays festive and fun, follow these safety tips while decorating outdoors:

- Use lights — and if needed, extension cords — that are approved for outdoor use.
- Before decorating, check all light strands for damages and burned out lights. Frayed insulation, exposed wires and broken plugs are all hazards and should be discarded. When replacing bulbs, unplug the strand.
- Consider purchasing miniature or LED lights as they use less energy and are long lasting. LED lights are also shatterproof and present no fire hazard.
- To avoid accidentally leaving your lights on, consider a timer. Make sure the timer you use is rated to handle the total wattage of your lights.

Visit myavista.com/safety for more safety tips.

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