

Code of Practice on the Efficient Use of Electricity & Gas

This Code of Practice outlines firmus energy (Supply) Limited (firmus energy, we, us, our) services in relation to the provision of advice and guidance on improving energy efficiencies and reducing electricity and gas consumption.

firmus energy's vision is to become Northern Ireland's 1st choice energy provider for industrial, commercial and residential customers. We aim to do so by simply putting our customers first.

When you save energy, you save money and you help the environment. This code provides practical and often free ways to help you reduce your electricity and gas bills and your carbon footprint.

Energy Efficiency tips

You can reduce your gas and electricity usage and costs by taking the following steps to be more energy-efficient:

Electronics and appliances

- Choose 'A' rated appliances; all electrical appliances carry a European Energy Label that rates its energy efficiency. A++ graded appliances are the most energy efficient and 'G' graded are the least.
- Enable power management features on computers, monitors and any other devices on which it is available.
- Don't leave appliances on standby, that glowing little red light is a sign of wasted energy.
- Unplug phone and laptop chargers once the appliance is fully charged.

Lighting

- Switching off lights when you are not using them or them room is empty.
- Replace traditional light bulbs with energy saving light bulbs; they use around a quarter of the energy and will last around 10 times longer than an ordinary bulb
- Use 'task' lighting rather than whole room lighting when a small amount of light is required.
- Use fittings that have a day/night sensor which automatically turns the light on at night and off in the morning.

Washing Machine, Tumble dryer and dishwasher

- Fill up your dishwasher and washing machine to make sure you only run them when they are full.
- If you have a two rate electricity meter and are on a cheaper night electricity tariff, run any appliances you can, such as washing machines and dishwashers at night.
- Use your washing machine at 30°; washing at a lower temperature will save you electricity.
- Spin dry clothes in the washing machine before using the tumble dryer.
- Where possible use a clothes line to dry clothes, tumble dryers use a large amount of gas or electricity.

Cooking

- Keep saucepan lids on-this enables you to turn down the heat.
- Microwave your food; microwaves generally use 10 percent less energy than a conventional oven.
- Use an electric kettle to boil water for cooking instead of using the hob.

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Fridge/Freezer

- Adjust the thermostat to maintain the correct temperature.
- Wait for food to cool down before placing it in the fridge; the fridge will not need to use as much electricity to maintain the temperature.
- Place your fridge away from ovens, radiators and other heat sources and ensure there is adequate ventilation at the back sides, and top.
- Defrost your fridge or freezer regularly.
- Load and unload the fridge as quickly as possible, don't leave the door open for longer than you need to.

Heating and Hot water

- Set your central heating timer to turn on 30 minutes before you get up or arrive home, and turn off 30 minutes before you leave for work or go to bed
- Turning down the thermostat by just 1°C could reduce your heating bill by as much as 10%.
- Programme when your heating and hot water comes on and off, and adjust seasonally.
- If your existing boiler is more than 15 years old you may benefit from a boiler replacement. A high efficiency boiler with a full set of heating controls will make your central heating system more efficient and reduce your gas and electricity costs.
- Ensure that the heating system is well maintained so it runs efficiently.
- Use Thermostatic Radiator Valves (TRV's) to control the temperature of each room and can help reduce energy bills.
- If you're using electricity for heating, storage heaters are preferable to radiant fires and fan heaters as they make full use of off-peak, cheap rate electricity.
- Do not leave the immersion heater on continuously.
- If you have a hot water cylinder, check that it is fully insulated. If not, invest in an insulating jacket that is at least 80mm.
- Fit a time switch to control the immersion heater-you can override the time switch should you need to.
- Have a shower rather than a bath; this will not only save energy but time, money and water.

Check for Draughts

- Check external doors and windows close tightly, if you have any draughts, fit a draught strip.
- Fit flaps on your letter box, key holes and loft hatch to prevent draughts.
- Close curtains at dusk to reduce the amount of heat escaping through your windows.

Insulation

- Install glass fibre or mineral wool loft insulation of the recommended thickness.
- Around 33% of heat is lost through walls; by installing cavity wall insulation this can be reduced.
- When replacing windows or doors install double glazing windows to create an effective barrier against heat loss
- Insulate exposed primary hot water pipes to prevent wasteful heat loss

Warm Homes Scheme

The Warm Homes Scheme is funded by the Department for Social Development to make your home warmer, healthier and more energy efficient.

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The Warm Homes Scheme is for people who receive certain qualifying benefits and own or rent their home from a private landlord in Northern Ireland.

There are two levels of help available to those who qualify:

Warm Homes – Offers a range of insulation measures to households on a qualifying benefit.

Under Warm Homes you may be able to receive the following help:

- Cavity Wall Insulation
- Loft Insulation
- Hot water tank jacket
- Benefit Entitlement Check
- Energy Advice

Warm Homes Plus – Offers insulation and heating measures to households in receipt of a qualifying benefit and who are identified through the assessment process to have Economy 7, Solid Fuel, Bottled Gas / LPG or no system at all.

As well as the improvements available under Warm Homes, householders who are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits may also be eligible for:

- Installation of a fully controlled energy-efficient oil or gas central heating system where no system currently exist.
- Conversion of an existing bottled gas (LPG), solid fuel or Economy 7 heating system to oil or natural gas

For further information regarding Warm Homes and Warm Homes Plus, including a full list of eligibility criteria and qualifying benefits, contact Warm Homes on 0800 988 0559 or www.warm-homes.com

Ways to further reduce your energy bills

Choose a cheaper tariff

- Choose a gas or electricity tariff which gives discounts for paying by direct debit, reading your own meter or online billing.
- If you use more electricity at night you could benefit from switching to a two rate economy 7 meter with a cheaper unit rate for electricity used during the 'night' period.

For more information contact our customer service team on 08456 08 00 88 or (Textphone/Minicom) 08456 03 10 08 (Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm).

Help with Energy Efficiency

For help and advice on how to use gas and electricity efficiently, avoid waste and reduce your energy costs, you can:

- Log onto our website: <http://www.firmusenergy.co.uk/default.aspx>

Our website has a dedicated safety and efficiency section where you can find details on how to reduce your energy consumption and costs.

- Call us on 08456 08 00 88 or (Textphone/Minicom) 08456 03 10 08 (Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm)

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We have trained staff who can offer practical advice about the efficient use of energy and any grants or assistance available to you.

- Contact the Consumer Council for general advice:
Tel: 028 9067 2488
Complaints: 0800 121 6022
Fax: 028 9065 7701
E-mail: info@consumercouncil.org.uk
Website: www.consumercouncil.org.uk

In addition, you can request a copy of our energy efficiency tips by contacting us. These will be sent to you free of charge. There are a number of ways you can request a copy:

- phone our Customer Care Line on 08456 00 88 or if you have a minicom ring 08456 03 10 88 (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm)
e-mail to furtherinfo@firmusenergy.co.uk
- write to us at the below address:
firmus energy
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