

Code of Practice on the Efficient Use of Electricity & Gas

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 **firmus** taking natural gas further
energy

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.

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 and have the boiler serviced annually by a Gas Safe Registered Engineer.
- Use Thermostatic Radiator Valves (TRV's) to control the temperature of each room and can help reduce energy bills. Check your radiators are working effectively, if there are cold spots it indicates you may need to bleed the radiator.
- 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.
- To prepare your home for freezing conditions you should locate the stop tap/valve, which is usually found under the sink in your kitchen/utility room. Please check you can turn this on/off as it enables you to shut off the water supply in an emergency.

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

To assist with energy efficiency in Northern Ireland a range of schemes are available through the Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP). If you are a householder and would like further information about the NISEP schemes available please contact the Northern Ireland Energy Advice Line on 0800 111 44 55.

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 the firmus energy customer service team on the details below.

Help with Energy Efficiency

The NI Energy Advice Line service offers free comprehensive advice and support on how to save energy in the home and on assistance available.

Consumers can call **0800 111 44 55** during office hours or use the call back service for out of hours.

Consumers can also visit the NI Housing Executive website at www.nihe.gov.uk under Community.

This service offers advice and a contact form for energy efficiency advice and signposting for grants.

Log onto our website: www.firmusenergy.co.uk

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

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

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 Services Line on 0330 024 9000 (Monday-Thursday, 9am-5pm, Friday 9am -3.30pm) e-mail to furtherinfo@firmusenergy.co.uk
- write to us at the below address:
firmus energy
A4 & A5 Fergusons Way
Kilbegg Road
Antrim
BT41 4LZ

The Consumer Council is an independent consumer organisation, providing free, impartial energy advice provides free energy advice. You can contact the Consumer Council for general advice on www.consumerCouncil.org.uk on **0800 121 6022** or **contact@consumerCouncil.org.uk**

You can write to: The Consumer Council, Floor 3, Seatem House, 28-32 Alfred Street, Belfast BT2 8EN

The Consumer Council can also investigate complaints about natural gas, electricity, buses, trains, planes, ferries, coal, private parking, water, sewage and postal services. If having discussed the matter and received a formal response, you feel that your complaint still has not been satisfactorily resolved, you may refer the matter at no cost. This does not affect your statutory right to go to court if you deem the solution unsatisfactory.