

Stay warm and save money: your winter heating checklist



We've teamed up with Energy Saving Trust this **Energy Savers Week** to help you stay warm and spend less on your energy bills with our winter heating checklist.

✓ 1. Check your radiators

Cold spots caused by trapped air could mean your radiators aren't giving out as much heat as they should. You can bleed your radiators yourself:

1. Some radiators have a valve that can be bled using a flathead screwdriver
2. If the valve has a square spindle with no flathead cutout, you'll need a radiator bleeding key. You can get a radiator key from most DIY shops or online
3. Please ensure the heating's off and has had time to cool down before bleeding
4. You may need to repressurise the system after doing this. You can check your boiler's user manual for how to do this or check with a heating engineer

Thermostatic radiator valves - the numbers normally correspond to a specific room temperature (e.g. on a scale of 0-5, 5 is typically 30°C), so turning them up to the maximum or minimum could still mean you're over or underheating that room in your property. On a 0-5 scale, 4 is usually okay for rooms that need to keep warm and 2 or 3 is okay for rooms that don't need to be as warm.

✓ 2. Check your boiler's flow temperature

- The flow temperature is the temperature of the water your boiler sends to your radiators and hot water cylinder (if you have one)
- Turning your boiler's flow temperature down can reduce your heating bill by as much as 9%, according to some claims
- This is set on the boiler itself - you can check your user manual to find out how to change this. If you're unsure, you can ask a heating engineer to reduce the flow temperature for you
- If you have a combi boiler, you could turn it down to 60°C in cold weather. In mild weather you might be able to turn it down as low as 50°C.
- If you have a boiler with a hot water cylinder, you can turn it down to 65°C. Don't set it any lower otherwise the boiler won't be able to heat your hot water cylinder to a safe temperature.
- After reducing the flow temperature, your boiler will take longer to heat your home and your hot water (if you have a cylinder). You should set your boiler to come on earlier to give it more time to work

✓ 3. Keep your heating set at the lowest comfortable temperature (typically 18-21 degrees)

Setting a higher temperature on your room thermostat doesn't make your property warm up any faster but it could waste energy. Set your heating to come on earlier so that it has longer to work; this uses less energy than turning up the thermostat

✓ 4. Book in a boiler service

The last thing you want is to switch your heating on during a cold snap only to find it's broken down. You should also think about getting a service booked in with a Gas Safe engineer if you haven't already had a service this year. This will also ensure it's working safely and efficiently.

Also check if an annual service might be needed to keep your boiler's warranty valid.

✓ 5. Don't rely on portable electric heaters

Portable electric heaters can be handy for heating one room for a short time, but they are usually more expensive to run than your main heating system.

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