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## **Myth Busters: The Right Ways to Save Energy During Cooler Weather from Reliant's Energy Expert**

*Get Ready Now to Save Energy and Stash Extra Cash Through the Winter*

HOUSTON - October in Texas means cooler Friday night lights, fall foliage in the Hill Country and a chance to enjoy the Lone Star State after the summer heat. October is also Energy Awareness Month and a good time for Texans to get their homes ready for winter to save energy and money.

"Even with temperatures dropping like autumn leaves, it is still important to pay close attention to your energy efficiency during the fall and winter months," said Bill Clayton, Reliant Energy vice president of customer care and an expert energy efficiency advisor. "For most homes, heating can be one of the largest energy expenses, especially if you rely on electric heat. Avoiding a few common missteps can help consumers use less electricity this winter."

- **Myth #1:** *Heating systems need less maintenance than air conditioning.*  
Professional maintenance for your furnace or heat pump every year can prolong the life of your system and save energy. More than one third of Texas customers use electric heating, which can amount to 60 percent of your winter electric bill. If you need to replace your system, look for the [ENERGY STAR®](#) label when purchasing equipment.
- **Myth #2:** *Keeping your windows covered improves efficiency.*  
During the cooler fall and winter months, open curtains during the day to allow sunlight to naturally heat your home; close them at night to help keep that natural heat inside.
- **Myth #3:** *Using a fireplace is an efficient way to heat your home.*  
A nice fire in the fireplace is great on a chilly evening, but it is not the most efficient way to heat your home. Even more importantly, leaving the chimney flue open all the time sends the warm air in your house straight up the chimney. Be sure to close the damper after the fire dies out or you turn off the gas.
- **Myth #4:** *Set it and forget it. Keep your thermostat on the same setting all year long.*  
A programmable thermostat is a great way to keep comfortable and save energy. But, you need to set it appropriately for the season. Keeping your thermostat at the same temperature all year long, regardless of time of day or year, can impact your electricity bill. If you have a programmable thermostat, change the setting for winter so that the temperature decreases

during the day when you are away from home and warms up just before you return in the evening.

- **Myth #5:** *You only need to change your air filter when you're using your air conditioner.* Check your air filters at least once a month. Regularly replacing dirty filters helps your heating and air conditioning system run better and last longer. Check your filter(s) every time you receive your monthly electricity statement or sign up for [Reliant Filters Made Easy](#), a new service that delivers replacement filters directly to your home on the schedule you choose.

“Reliant Energy is committed to helping its customers manage their energy use,” said Clayton. “We provide tools and information to help them be more energy efficient and lower overall energy costs. Additional tips on how to improve home energy efficiency can be found at Reliant’s [energywise](#)<sup>sm</sup> website.”

#### **About Reliant Energy:**

Reliant Energy provides electricity and energy services to approximately 1.6 million retail customers—including homes, small and large businesses, manufacturing facilities, government entities and institutions across Texas. As part of NRG Energy (NYSE: NRG), Reliant Energy is backed by one of the nation’s largest power producers. NRG owns and operates more than 24,000 megawatts of generation capacity, including more than 11,000 megawatts of capacity in Texas. For more information about Reliant Energy products and services, visit [www.reliant.com](http://www.reliant.com).

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