



## PRESS RELEASE

Stacy Wemhoff  
Communications Coordinator  
[swemhoff@loup.com](mailto:swemhoff@loup.com)  
(402) 562-5711

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
1/29/2019

# EnergyWise™ Tip: Garages

**COLUMBUS, Neb.** — As cold weather sets its grip on our daily lives, many people retreat to their garage to escape the outdoor elements.

Cars are parked inside to avoid scraping off ice and snow in the morning. Projects are moved in to evade the chilling wind. Closing up the doors and windows, many start using supplemental heat to make their garage even more hospitable. Wood stoves are stoked. Space heaters are plugged in. Shop furnace thermostats are turned up. Unless folks remember how these actions affected their energy use last year, they may be shocked when their first winter utility bills arrive.

Usually the garage is the most energy inefficient room of a home. A typical two-car garage measures 480 square feet, or about 20 percent of the size of the average U.S. home. Yet, it is often the least insulated and sealed, uses the least efficient lighting, and is home to older appliances. Before taking up temporary residency in your garage this winter and cranking up the heat, consider a few of the following projects to keep your energy use from literally going through the roof.

### **Insulate the walls**

Many older homes (and even some newer ones) were not built with insulation in the walls of the garage. While most have outside siding, sheathing and a layer of particle board to keep elements out, these materials do little to retain heat. Insulating can be as easy as tacking fiberglass insulation between exposed joists. If your garage walls are finished, blow in insulation through a small hole in the drywall or paneling.

### **Caulk between the walls and the concrete floor**

Most garages were not built using compressible foam between the lower framing and concrete floor. Over time, this connection swells, shrinks and moves, leaving spaces that allow air from the outside to leak in. Use a foam sealant or a latex/silicone-based caulk to seal this often overlooked area.

### **Seal the door between the house and garage**

If your garage is attached to the house, this door is often a major source of cold air coming into your home. If your garage is detached, it may be letting much of your garage heat escape. Check to ensure weather-stripping is installed around the entire door frame, and that it's intact, pliable and provides a snug seal. Also, ensure your threshold and door sweep are sealing the bottom.

### **Insulate the garage door**

Even some garages with properly-insulated walls were constructed with an uninsulated garage door. This negates much of the benefit from insulated walls. A new, insulated door will cost several hundreds of dollars or more, but will provide a clean appearance. A lower-cost solution is to purchase foam board insulation and install it on the inside panels of your existing doors. Remember, you must cut the foam board to a size a little smaller than your garage door's panels so it doesn't smash together with insulation on other panels as the door rolls up and down.

### **Switch to LED lighting**

Compared to traditional, incandescent lights, LEDs use only 10 percent of the electricity to produce identical illumination levels. Compared to fluorescent lighting, LEDs use 40 to 60 percent less energy for the same amount of light. More importantly, fluorescent lights produce less and less light as the temperature drops. Many fluorescent lights will not even operate below 10°F. In contrast, LEDs slightly increase their light output the colder it gets.

### **Replace older appliances**

If you have an older model refrigerator or freezer in your garage, it may cost more money for you to operate it over time than it would to invest into a new unit. Although the energy savings are smaller in the winter, consider how hot your garage becomes in the summer. Some people move their old televisions to the garage, too. Older televisions can use up to 10 times more energy than newer models. If you use these older appliances quite a bit, consider purchasing a new ENERGY STAR appliance. If you are not ready to replace the old one, at least unplug it when not in use to save electricity.

For additional information on how to make your home, business or school EnergyWise<sup>SM</sup>, contact Loup Power District, Cornhusker Public Power District, Nebraska Public Power District, or your local public power utility. While you're at it, check out the EnergyWise<sup>SM</sup> programs designed to help you save money. Find energy efficiency information online at [www.loup.com](http://www.loup.com), [www.cornhusker-power.com](http://www.cornhusker-power.com), and [www.nppd.com/save-energy](http://www.nppd.com/save-energy).

###