



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Bracing Yourself—And Your Home—For Old Man Winter

PATTY RITCHIE November 7, 2014

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It's hard to believe that winter is just around the corner. If last year is any indication of what the coming months hold, it's a good idea to take steps now to protect your home from the cold temperatures, whipping winds and mountains of snow. Here are some of the most beneficial steps you can take to safeguard your home and save on heating costs at the same time in the coming season:

***Have your heating system tuned:*** One of the most important things you can do before winter starts is to make sure your heating system is running efficiently. Have a professional look things over and it can save you both time and money further on down the road.

***Check your roof:*** Before the snow starts flying and the wind begins whipping, it's a good idea to have your roof checked for any repairs—like leaks or loose shingles—that may need to be made.

***Clean your gutters:*** Leaves, twigs and other things that find their way into your gutters throughout the fall can cause water to back up. Be sure to clean your gutters out to prevent ice dams and damage to your roof.

***Seal out of use doors and windows:*** By using transparent film to cover any windows or doors you won't need to use in the coming season, you can save roughly 14 percent on your home heating bill.

***Use a programmable thermostat:*** When it comes to reducing energy costs, the programmable thermostat is a valuable tool. Set your thermostat for lower during timer periods when you're not home or asleep. If you turn your thermostat down anywhere from 6 to 9 degrees, you'll save roughly 10 percent on your bill monthly.

While you may be dreading winter and the costs that come with it, keep in mind experts are predicting that heating your home will be less expensive this year. According to National Grid, natural gas heating customers in upstate New York could potentially see reductions in their bills of 10 percent or more when compared to last year. Customers who use electricity to heat their homes could potentially see a three to 9 percent reduction in their bills.

If you're looking for more tips on how you can reduce your energy consumption and cut your bills, check out the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority's website by [clicking here](#).