



Eco Wise



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October is Energy Awareness Month Enlist in HUD's "Commit to Conserve" Program

Conservation starts with the individual. Conservation starts with a child committing to turn off the lights when leaving a room; an adult using the microwave to cook a small meal; maintenance personnel at a housing authority that repair leaky air conditioning and refrigeration systems in a timely manner; and, a housing authority's management team that practices conservation by example. Commit to Conserve today, not by promising, but by doing! Looking for ways to conserve? Start by **preparing for winter**. Grab the attention of your residents and staff with these colorful [campaign materials](#).



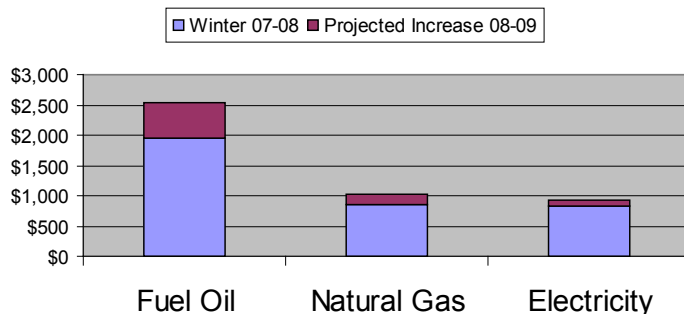
Need a reason to **Commit to Conserve**? Check out the [potential savings!](#)

Prepare for Winter

Energy awareness month is especially important because winter, and heating season, is just around the corner. In previous years heating and cooling bills accounted for 50-70 percent of the annual operating costs of most homes. But that will get worse as heating fuel prices increase again this winter, according to [Energy Information Administration \(EIA\) projections](#). Projections put natural gas prices two percent higher than last year, which were nine percent higher than the year before. Electricity rates are expected to increase by about ten percent, and oil prices by 25 percent. Don't be at all surprised if your local prices increase even more than that.

During extreme weather conditions, residents should not have to choose between paying for heating fuel and buying food for their families. Unheated or poorly heated homes are unsafe in the winter, and can lead to frozen pipes and other property damage. Protect yourself and your residents from rising heating costs by [weatherizing](#) your buildings, and spread the word about the [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\)](#).

Projected Heating Costs for Average Household



Weatherize

Weatherstripping windows and doors, and caulking around plumbing and electrical penetrations can greatly reduce the amount of air leakage in your buildings. EPA estimates that if you add insulation to the attic and air-seal, you can reduce heating and cooling bills by as much as 20 percent.

The [Weatherization Assistance Program \(WAP\)](#) helps provide weatherization services to households, permanently reducing their energy bills by making their homes more energy efficient. In addition to freeing up money for pressing family needs, weatherization produces [non-energy benefits](#) including increased property values, economic growth, and fewer greenhouse gas emissions from power plants.

Check out [activities in your state](#). *Continued on next page.*

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Events and Training

[EEBA 2008 Excellence in Building Conference and Expo](#)
October 21-23, 2008
Phoenix, AZ

[National Community Action Foundation's 2008 Energy Programs Leveraging Conference](#)
October 27-30
St. Petersburg, FL

[Energy Efficiency & Sustainability Symposium](#)
November 5-6, 2008
Atlanta, GA

[Washington DC Green Festival](#)
November 8-9, 2008
Washington, DC

Expanding from Lead Poisoning Prevention to Healthy Homes
[Conference Calls on First Monday of Each Month](#)
[Upcoming Sessions](#)

Prepare for Winter *cont'd*

Energy Assistance with LIHEAP

Residents who meet income criteria specified by their [State administration offices](#) are eligible to receive:

- Bill payment assistance
- Energy crisis assistance
- Weatherization and energy-related home repairs

Eligibility in most states is based on income no greater than 160 percent of the federal poverty level or 60 percent of the State median income- whichever is greater.

Low-VOC Paints: It's Halloween but Don't Paint Your Walls with a Poisoned Apple

Paints and other materials with high levels of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) reduce indoor air quality for residents and staff.

Most commercially available paint includes additives to improve coverage and decrease drying time- but many of these additives contain VOCs that emit gas fumes, polluting the indoor environment for anywhere from days to weeks. VOCs aren't limited to paints, either. Stains, finishes, adhesives and sheet goods like plywood and particle board all contain VOCs.

VOCs have been linked to headaches, asthma, and more serious health issues. An [EPA study](#) found the presence of a dozen common VOCs to be about two to five times higher inside homes than outside, whether testing sites were rural or highly-industrial. When using any VOC-containing materials you can maintain [healthy indoor air](#) by choosing the lowest-VOC materials possible and by providing adequate ventilation.

The independent, non-profit organization [Green Seal](#) provides science-based environmental certification standards for a wide [variety of products](#), including those containing VOCs. Green Seal standards for [paints](#) vary depending on use and finish, but shouldn't exceed the following values for these finishes:

Interior Paint

- Flat - 50
- Gloss or Semi-gloss - 150

Exterior Paint

- Flat - 100
- Non-flat - 200

The VOC values above are measured in grams of VOC/liter of product (minus water), and don't include colorants added at point of purchase. Colorants often contain high levels of VOCs, so the deeper the color of paint, the higher the level of VOCs.



Tips for Maintenance Staff and Residents

Maintenance Corner- Keep Heating Bills in Check

Tips for Maintenance Staff

- Properly maintain heating systems. Have furnaces cleaned annually and replace filters once a month during heating season, or as needed.
- Caulk and weatherstrip windows and doors to prevent uncomfortable drafts and wasted heat.

Tips for Residents

- Clean warm-air registers, baseboard heaters and radiators as needed. Make sure furniture or draperies don't block them.
- Reduce the thermostat setting when everyone is sleeping or away from home. Consider investing in a programmable thermostat.
- Once windows are properly caulked, apply temporary window film to further reduce air-leakage and heat loss

Note- Preventing air-leakage will save money and energy this heating season. But as you tighten your building, it's important to make sure that your furnace, water heater, and other fuel-burning appliances have sufficient combustion air. If they do not, backdrafting of carbon monoxide and other gases into the home can occur. Consult your utility or an energy professional to assess the situation.

Email us with your Maintenance Corner questions at pheccinfo@nelrod.com.

Regional Spotlight

[Maine State Housing Authority \(MSHA\) keeps Residents Warm](#)

MSHA is working hard to provide residents with the resources necessary to stay warm this winter. Besides making sure residents-in-need have easy access to the [State's LIHEAP funds](#), MSHA is gearing up for a productive training season. They plan to [train](#) 200 home energy auditors and about 500 weatherization technicians before year's end.

Resources

[State Low-Income Energy Profiles](#)

Federal Home Page for the [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program](#)

[Campaign for Home Energy Assistance](#)

Resources for staff and resident advocates of LIHEAP.

[Home Energy Saver](#)

Resources for Residents

[ENERGY STAR for Kids](#)

[A Consumer's Guide to Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy](#)

[Insulation Fact Sheet](#)

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