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Getting started on an energy plan

Thinking about energy renovations but not sure where to start or invest your dollar for the most return on your energy bills? Now that you have read chapter two and have a better understanding of energy, your home, and heat loss you probably have a pretty good idea on where you think your renovation dollars should be spent. But have you completed an assessment of your home from top to bottom? By completing an assessment you can take a quick inventory or status of your home for identification of energy-saving solutions.

DO IT YOURSELF ASSESSMENT

A home energy assessment/audit will evaluate the energy efficiency of your home and outline improvements to the heating, cooling, hot water heating and other uses of energy in the house that could result in energy savings. To help you get started a do-it-yourself energy audit checklist has been included in this guide between pages 20 and 21.

If you are not comfortable taking on an assessment you may want to bring in the professionals.



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BRING IN THE PROFESSIONALS

Residential property owners can qualify for Ontario provincial grants by improving the energy efficiency of their home and reducing their home's impact on the environment. The program requires energy efficiency evaluations through licensed service organizations. Energy advisors must be certified and conduct a detailed, on-site evaluation of your home's energy use from the attic down to the foundation. They will then provide a personalized report, including a checklist of recommended retrofits to improve the energy efficiency of your home.

The report will also show the grant amounts for each eligible upgrade that you can receive by carrying out these energy-saving improvements. The maximum grant you can receive for a home is \$5,000 from the provincial government. The grant is calculated and based on the grant amounts and eligibility requirements that are in effect at the time of the post-retrofit evaluation. You must complete your retrofits and receive your post-retrofit evaluation within 18 months from the date of your pre-retrofit evaluation report, whichever comes first, is subject to available funding, and may be withdrawn at any time.

For more information on this program, including a list of certified energy advisors visit Ontario Home Energy Savings Program at mei.gov.on.ca/en/energy/conservation/ohesp



REBATES AND INCENTIVES

When you're planning your energy renovation be sure to investigate all opportunities for rebates and incentives. Some upgrades will qualify for multiple incentives so do your homework first. The links below will help you get started and find more information on how you can save energy and cash on your energy renovations.

Union Gas

uniongas.com/energyefficiency

- Energy Conservation tips, techniques, current rebates and incentives
- Fuel Cost Comparisons for natural gas products
- Where to buy or rent
- Manufacturer links

Ontario Home Energy Savings Program

mei.gov.on.ca/en/energy/conservation/ohesp

- This program requires an energy audit by a certified energy advisor/auditor before and after renovations

Ontario Power Authority

everykilowattcounts.ca/residential/coolingsavings/index.php

- Cool Savings Program – rebates for reducing your heating and cooling electrical load