

## Be Energy Smart

As a consumer, you can take simple and inexpensive measures to lower your heating costs.

- Have a professional check your furnace and gas appliances once a year.
- Set the thermostat between 65 and 68 degrees during cooler months.
- Close leaks around doors, windows, and openings with caulking or weather stripping.
- Insulate pipes and ducts that run through unheated areas.
- Use draperies, blinds, or shutters on windows to slow loss of heat. Open coverings on sunny days to let in the warmth.
- Avoid blocking heating vents with furniture, draperies, or carpet.
- Purchase low-cost, pre-cut gaskets to insulate behind electrical switches and plates.
- Make sure to clean the air filters on your heating unit regularly.
- Ensure that attics, crawlspaces, and basements have the proper levels of insulation.
- Fireplaces can be major sources of heat loss. Close the flue when not in use. If you never use the fireplace, have the flue plugged.
- Be aware of drafts. If you can't seal them, make sure you sit away from them. This will help you feel warmer.
- Portable heaters are a very inefficient way to heat your house and can cause your energy bill to skyrocket.

More tips can be found on the US Department of Energy's website at [www.DOE.GOV](http://www.DOE.GOV). Also, visit the ORS website at [ORS.SC.GOV](http://ORS.SC.GOV).

## ABOUT THE ORS

The South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) represents the public interest in utility regulation matters as it pertains to (1) the concerns of the using and consuming public with respect to public utility services, regardless of the class of customer; and (2) preservation of the continued investment in and maintenance of utility facilities so as to provide reliable and high quality utility services. This includes matters before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (PSC), which is the state agency that sets rates and regulates the services of investor-owned utilities.

### ORS Consumer Services Can Help

If you've spoken with your utility and still need help, ORS Consumer Services can contact the company on your behalf. The ORS can check to see whether the utility has followed all applicable regulations. Staff can also direct you to social services agencies that may have available funds to assist with your utility bills.



8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Monday - Friday (closed state holidays)  
Messages can be left on 24-hour ORS Consumer Services hotline.



(803) 737-5230 (Columbia, SC)  
(800) 922-1531 (toll-free in SC)



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# Managing Winter Heating Costs

## Be Energy Safe

Consumers may want to use cheaper alternative sources to heat their homes. However, many of these can be serious safety hazards.

- Portable space heaters should be at least three feet away from anything that can burn or melt and should always be turned off when leaving the room or going to sleep.
- Wood and coal stoves, fireplaces, chimneys, chimney connectors, and all other solid-fueled heating equipment need to be checked once a year by a professional and cleaned as recommended.
- Portable kerosene heaters must be fueled only in a well-ventilated area, free of flame and other heat sources, and only when the heater has fully cooled. Make sure to follow all instructions provided by the manufacturer.
- When purchasing heating devices, look for ones that have an automatic-shutoff feature. Always follow manufacturer instructions when turning heating devices on and off.
- Be sure that any gas-fueled heating device is installed in a well-ventilated area. Never put unvented gas heaters in bathrooms or bedrooms.
- In South Carolina, portable kerosene and natural gas heaters are not legal for use in apartments or businesses.
- LP (liquefied petroleum) gas heaters with self-contained fuel supplies are not allowed for home use by NFPA codes.

For more safety tips, visit the  
SC State Fire Marshal's website at  
[StateFire.LLR.SC.GOV](http://StateFire.LLR.SC.GOV).



## Assistance Agencies

Consumers may find they need help meeting their energy needs. Some utilities support programs in local energy offices throughout the state to help consumers. The agencies listed below can help you apply for assistance.

**Call 2-1-1 anytime– 24 hours a day, 365 days a year– to connect to vital services in your community. This service is free and multilingual. 2-1-1 is for finding community health and human services resources.**

**Aiken/Barnwell Counties Community Action Commission, Inc.**

*Aiken, Barnwell, and Lexington Counties*  
(803) 648-6836

**Beaufort/Jasper Economic Opportunity Commission, Inc.**

*Beaufort and Jasper Counties*  
(843) 470-4508

**Carolina Community Actions, Inc.**

*Chester, Fairfield, Lancaster, Union, and York Counties*  
(803) 329-5195

**Charleston Co. Human Services Commission**

*Charleston County*  
(843) 723-9285

**Chesterfield-Marlboro Economic Opportunity Council, Inc.**

*Chesterfield and Marlboro Counties*  
(843) 320-9760

**Darlington County Community Action Agency**

*Darlington County*  
(843) 332-1135

**GLEAMNS Human Resources Commission, Inc.**

*Greenwood, Laurens, Edgefield, Abbeville, McCormick, Newberry, and Saluda Counties*  
(864) 223-8434

**Lowcountry Community Action Agency, Inc.**

*Colleton and Hampton Counties*  
(843) 549-5576

**O-C-A-B Community Action Agency, Inc.**

*Orangeburg, Calhoun, Allendale, and Bamberg Counties*  
(803) 536-1027

**Pee Dee Community Action Agency**

*Dillon, Florence, and Marion Counties*  
(843) 678-3400

**Piedmont Community Actions, Inc.**

*Cherokee and Spartanburg Counties*  
(864) 327-4546

**Sunbelt Human Advancement Resources, Inc. (SHARE)**

*Anderson, Greenville, Oconee, and Pickens Counties*  
(864) 269-0700

**Waccamaw Economic Opportunity Council, Inc.**

*Horry, Georgetown, and Williamsburg Counties*  
(843) 234-4100

**Wateree Community Actions, Inc.**

*Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, Richland, and Sumter Counties*  
(803) 775-4354

**American Red Cross - Central South Carolina**

(803) 540-1200