

## Keep those power bills down!

We're all feeling the chill at this time of year, and now's a good time to look at power use in your home – small changes can make a big difference to your power bill!

### Top tips for reducing your power bill

Ensure you're on the right electricity plan.

Use tools such as [powerswitch.org.nz](https://powerswitch.org.nz) to check you're getting the best deal.

1. Switching off your old second fridge could save up to \$300 annually.
2. Use the energy from the sun to dry clothes on an outside line, instead of in an electric dryer. You could save about \$200 annually.
3. Run your heat pump on the most effective settings and clean the filter regularly to ensure it operates efficiently.
4. Change to energy-saving light bulbs. A change of just eight energy-saving bulbs equates to \$150 per year.
5. Keep an eye on your shower usage and check your fixtures. If the water from your shower can fill a bucket in less than a minute, you could save about \$150 annually by changing to a more efficient showerhead. Keep your showers short – in a household of three, each extra minute of shower time costs about \$80 annually.
6. Turning off appliances left on standby saves about \$125 annually.
7. Washing your clothes in cold water rather than warm water could save \$65 annually.
8. Stop heat escaping, and draughts, with DIY double glazing and good, thick curtains.
9. Buy energy-efficient appliances. Visit [genless.govt.nz](https://genless.govt.nz) for info on how to choose and use home appliances wisely.



## What is Council doing to improve our air quality in winter?

Council maintains standards for trusted wood suppliers, checks burn compliance issues and monitors air quality.

### Good Wood scheme

It is illegal to burn wood with a moisture content greater than 25 per cent. This is because green, unseasoned firewood is difficult to burn and produces large amounts of smoke without generating much heat. Council's Good Wood scheme helps people identify trusted suppliers of dry, seasoned firewood for their woodburner. Good Wood suppliers have agreed to provide Nelson householders with seasoned firewood suitable for immediate use, or green firewood delivered far enough in advance that it has time to be seasoned for use in the winter months.

### Compliance

Our compliance role involves investigating complaints about smoky chimneys. This is usually an educational visit to see if we can help stop unwanted smoke. Most people find that they are able to solve the problem with one visit. If you need help, Council can advise on getting your flue and burner checked.

### Monitoring

Council monitors air quality in Nelson's airsheds against national environmental standards and reports on this annually. Find out which airshed you are in at [nelson.govt.nz/airsheds](https://nelson.govt.nz/airsheds). Monitoring allows Council to track progress towards air quality goals. You can see the air quality results for your airshed at:

[lawa.org.nz/explore-data/nelson-region/air-quality](https://lawa.org.nz/explore-data/nelson-region/air-quality)

## What can you do?

Using your wood burner efficiently will save you money, and keep your home warmer and drier.

- Buy your wood from a Good Wood supplier
- Make sure your fuel is dry and well stored
- Make sure your woodburner is working properly
- Light and use your fire the Burn Bright way by visiting [nelson.govt.nz/burn-bright](https://nelson.govt.nz/burn-bright)
- Talk to your neighbours if you see a problem with a smoky chimney – often a quick chat is better than making a complaint
- If the problem persists, contact Council and our officers will visit



## An easy way to check you are burning smoke-free

It's normal for some smoke to come out of your chimney while you're getting your fire going, but it should be burning well and smoke-free after about 30 minutes.

Once you've got it going, brave the cold and go outside to take a look at what's coming out of your chimney. After 20-30 minutes there should be almost no smoke coming from the chimney. It's good to check again 10 to 15 minutes after adding more wood.

If it's still smoky, consider the following:

- Are you using properly seasoned, dry wood? Does your wood pile have cover from the rain, and sufficient air flow to dry out?
- Are you closing down the air supply? Woodburners work best with the air control fully open
- Has your chimney been cleaned in the last 12 months?