



TAKING STEPS TOWARD A Sustainable Future

Before you choose a source of renewable energy to power your home, like solar, wind, or biomass, there are steps you can take as a homeowner to reduce your energy use, and your heat and electricity bills. Not only will you reduce the greenhouse gases that burning coal, oil, and natural gas generate, you will save money.

Here are some of the questions to ask yourself as you start this journey toward the smart use of energy. Is your home energy-efficient? Is it well insulated? Are you using a lot of heat, and is it heating your house, or heating the outside because heat is escaping? Are your appliances old, or are they energy-efficient?

We talked to experts who suggested the following steps to take to answer these questions and to consider before investing in renewable energy.

1. Check out NB Power's **Smart Habits** website. This site contains tips, tools and resources to help you reduce energy consumption, and describes how to take advantage of energy efficiency programs.

2. To get a detailed understanding of how much electricity you are using, **create an online profile** with NB Power using your NB Power account number and your meter number. You will then have a **home energy report** that shows you how much energy you're using now, allows you to track your use over time, and suggests ways to conserve more.

3. Once you've tracked your current energy use and have taken steps to conserve, it's time to think about energy efficiency. One easy program to take

advantage of involves **rebates** for LED light bulbs and water-efficient showerheads. You receive your discounts right at the cash when you purchase the products. NB Power usually offers these in-store rebates twice a year, in April and October. Smart strip power bars and programmable thermostats may also be included. The rebates are available in about **150 stores** across the province.

4. Renewable energy will be more affordable if you make bigger changes that will reduce your home energy use – and your bills. Those changes may be as simple as blocking drafts and wrapping pipes to reduce heat loss. But before doing more, do a home energy audit. You can **register with NB Power** and they will book an appointment.



“The first step we want customers to take a look at is conservation,” says Tracey Somers, Communications Specialist on Energy Efficiency for NB Power.

“Do you have good energy habits?

Are you turning off lights, making sure you don't leave equipment on, are you not taking 40-minute showers? Are you doing all those things you should be doing so you minimize the amount of energy you need to sustain your lifestyle?”





“Homeowners installing solar generally benefit a lot from getting some sort of home energy audit done,” says Mark McCann of MJM Solar Solutions. “That would be someone going through the house to analyze what you are using for hot water or heating, what are your insulation values in your house, are they sufficient, do you have a drafty house, and old house, those sort of things. We can normally go through and look at a whole house and see if there are opportunities to gain efficiency through lesser-cost items, like insulation.”

An energy advisor will come to your home and measure air leakage, as well as investigate your existing insulation levels in the attic, basement, and walls. Then the advisor will recommend measures you could take to improve insulation and air sealing. Energy audits cost \$210 plus HST. Private companies, including those who install renewable technology, will also do energy audits.

Once the home inspection is done, the advisor will provide a report with a list of recommendations on how to make your home more energy efficient. The advisor will rank the recommendations, telling you which ones are the most important. Then you can decide if you want to act on any, some, or all of the advice. If you decide to make changes and report the details back to NB Power within nine months, NB Power will send another advisor to check out the improvements you’ve made and let you know which incentives you qualify for. The second inspection is free. Let’s say you’ve reduced the amount of air leaking from your house by at least 50 percent over the rate measured in the first incentive. You will qualify for a \$500 air sealing bonus!

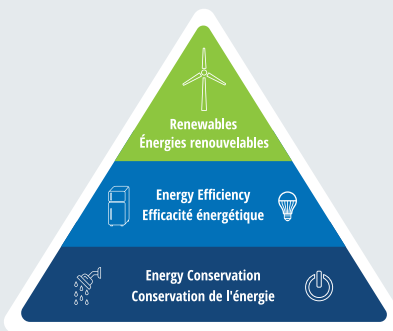
See if you qualify to apply for the province’s **Home Insulation Energy Savings Program** that offers incentives for owners of electrically heated homes for insulation upgrades, installing heat pumps or heat recovery ventilators.

5. Depending on the size of your home (number of bedrooms) and your income, you could qualify for free home energy efficiency upgrades. Check out NB Power’s **Low Income Energy Savings Program**,

which helps 200-300 families each year. Eligible customers can receive a fully funded energy retrofit. To sign up for the program, call 1-800-663-6272. There is a waiting list for the program. Here’s a **chart** to check to see if you are eligible.

“We’ve found that those homeowners that have gone through the program are saving, on average, \$1,000 on their electricity bills every year, so it makes quite a significant impact to these low-income households,” says Tracey Somers, spokesperson for NB Power.

NB Power also has a **Commercial Building Retrofit Program**, which provides incentives for owners of commercial buildings to get an energy audit done and to invest in upgrades and retrofitting to reduce energy use.



6. Once you’ve tracked your energy use, conserved as much energy as possible, and invested in energy-efficiency upgrades, you have completed the first two levels of the energy pyramid. The next level is to invest in renewable energy. Read our **case studies** to see how other New Brunswick families have chosen to use renewable energy technology in their homes.

Most of us have questions about the energy we already use, and where to find information if we want to know more. We’d like to spend less money for the power we need, but we’re unsure about how to sort out the options. We’re curious about the different kinds of energy that could power our homes, like solar or wind or other forms of renewable energy. Many of us don’t know which energy source would work for us, what steps we should take first, or whether changing the type of energy we rely on would mean we’d have to change our lifestyle.

The Conservation Council of New Brunswick would like to help you make informed choices about the energy you use. We’ve created a series of fact sheets and videos to answer these and other questions. Our goal is get you the information you need to make decisions about the right energy choice for you.

To learn more about energy audits, upgrades and renewable energy, and to find a list of resources and incentive programs in New Brunswick, visit:
www.conservationcouncil.ca



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