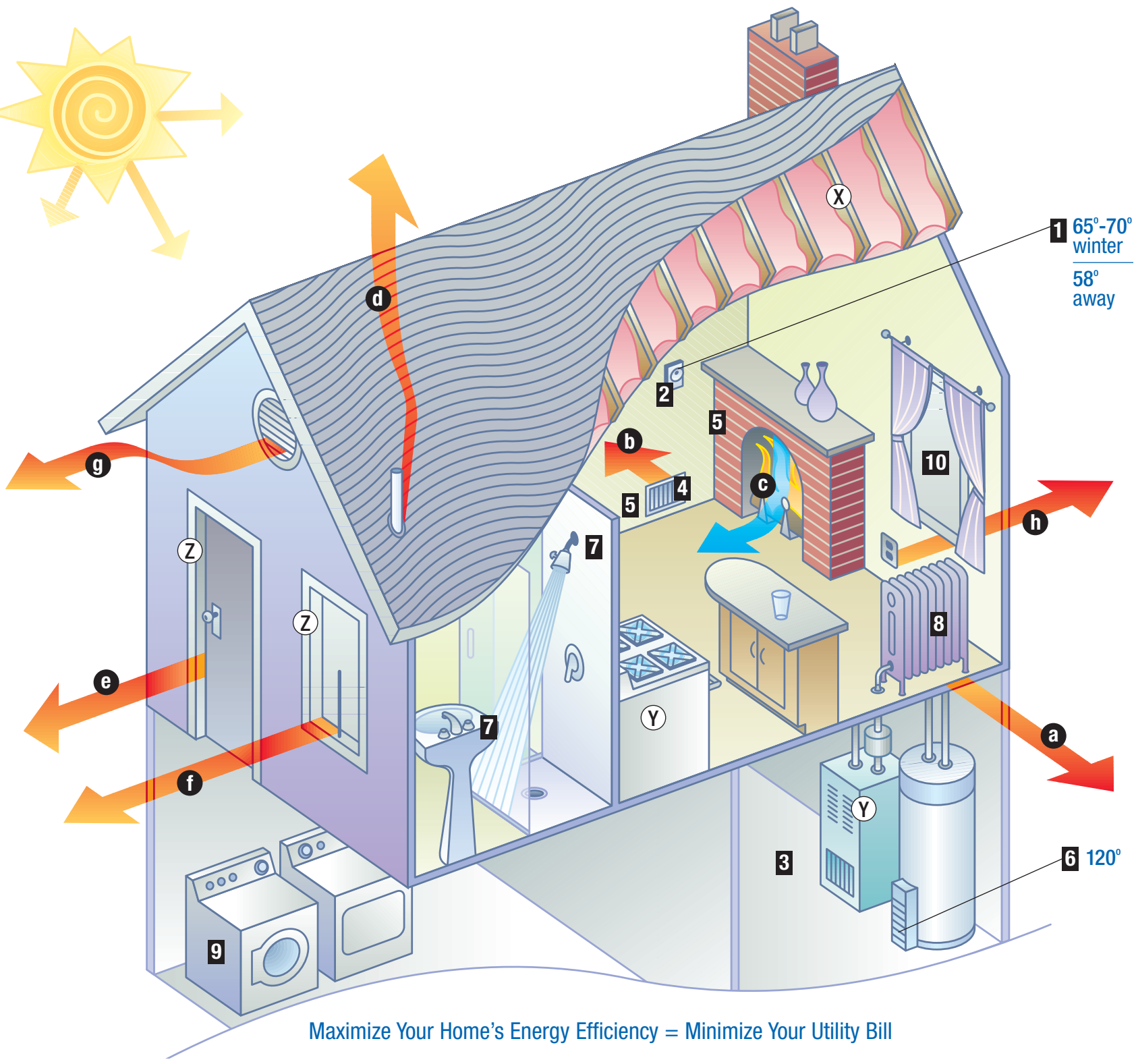
Using Energy Wisely

Natural gas prices are up. Here are some tips to keep your natural gas bills down.



Natural gas is America's most popular heating fuel. And thanks to efficiency gains, the average American home uses 29% less natural gas than it did in 1980.

Keep The Cold Out

Reducing air leaks could cut 10 percent from an average household's monthly energy bill. For example, consumers can:

- Seal leaks around doors, windows, and other openings such as pipes or ducts, with caulk or weather-stripping. The most common places where air escapes in homes are:

  - **a** floors, walls, ceilings
  - **b** ducts
  - **c** fireplace
  - **d** plumbing penetrations
  - **e** doors
  - **f** windows
  - **g** fans and vents
  - **h** electrical outlets

Use Energy Wisely

1 Set thermostats between 65 and 70 degrees during the winter, and at 58 degrees when away from the house for more than a few hours. Bear in mind that warmer temperatures are recommended for homes with ill or elderly persons or infants.

2 Turn down thermostats automatically without sacrificing comfort by installing an automatic setback or programmable thermostat.

SAVINGS: Cut annual heating bills by as much as 10 percent per year by turning your thermostat back 10 percent to 15 percent for eight hours per day.

3 Change or clean furnace filters once a month during the heating season. Use receipt of your natural gas bill as a reminder.

4 Warm air rises, so use registers to direct warm airflow across the floor.

5 Close vents and doors in unused rooms and close dampers on unused fireplaces.

6 Set water heater temperatures at 120 degrees. This will allow a family to cut water heating bills without sacrificing comfort.

7 Install water-flow restrictors in shower-heads and faucets.

8 Place a sheet of aluminum foil between the radiator and the wall to reflect heat back into the room.

9 Run washing machines and clothes dryers with a full load.

10 On sunny days, open draperies and blinds to let the sun's warmth in. Close them at night to insulate against cold air outside.

Plan for Long-Term Energy-Efficiency Improvements

X Check to see if attic and basement have the recommended levels of insulation.

Y Check the heating system and replace old, outdated appliances with high-efficiency natural gas models. When buying new appliances, compare energy efficiency ratings and annual operating costs.

Z Install storm or thermal windows and doors or double-paned glass. A less expensive alternative is plastic sheeting, which can be temporarily fastened over doors and windows to prevent drafts and retain heat.

BILL-PAYMENT PROGRAMS

Most natural gas utilities offer billing arrangements designed to help customers manage their natural gas bills. Contact your local natural gas utility for more information.

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE FOR LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

We care about our low-income customers. Help is available for those who have difficulty paying their heating bills. Your local natural gas utility has the information on a variety of assistance programs.

AGA American Gas Association

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