

Storage Heaters

Economy 7 Heating

A typical storage heater is wall-mounted and looks a bit like a radiator. It works by drawing electricity over the course of a few hours at night, and storing it as heat, which can then be used the following day.

Storage heaters are often referred to as Economy 7 heaters as this is the name of the electricity tariff they normally use. With an Economy 7 electricity tariff, seven hours of off-peak, cheaper electricity is available during the night. During the winter this cheaper electricity tends to be available between midnight and 7:00am, which may change to 1:00am to 8:00am during summer months.

By understanding how to use your storage heaters you may be able to reduce your heating costs and improve the comfort of your home.

How to use your storage heaters

Storage heaters usually have a set of simple controls.

An input control or dial allows you to set how much heat is stored during the night, with a higher number meaning your heater will charge for longer and more heat will be available. This is important as this control determines how much electricity you use and therefore how much your heating will cost.

During periods of warmer weather, or if you plan to be out of the house for long periods, you could reduce the input setting to avoid storing as much heat.

An output control or dial allows you to control how quickly the heat will escape from your storage heater. By turning the output control down to a smaller number, less heat will escape early in the day, and you may be able to retain more heat for the evening.

Some storage heaters will have a boost setting which uses more expensive daytime electricity to provide heat.



Case Study

A retired couple whose home is heated with electricity use storage heaters to take advantage of the Economy 7 tariff.

In winter, they are in for most of the day. This means they want the storage heater to charge fully at night, so they set the input to 6 and the output to 1 or off.

In the morning, to warm the house up, they turn the output to 4. Once the house is warm, they turn it down to 2, and in the evening when it becomes chillier, they turn it up to 5 or 6 to use up the remaining stored heat.

Night

Last thing at night the **input** is turned up full (to 6) ...



... and **output** is turned down to the minimum (1)



Day

Early morning turn output to 4



Mid-morning, turn output down to 2



Evening, turn output to 5-6



Supplementary Heaters

During colder weather your storage heaters may run out of heat in the evening and so you may need to use supplementary electric heaters. When selecting a supplementary heater you should consider the likely running cost and the level of controls, with oil filled electric heaters one of the more cost effective options.

When using supplementary heaters you should ensure that you are not creating a fire risk and also ensure that cables do not result in a trip hazard.

Tips to Reduce your Heating Costs!

1. You should turn your output control down or off altogether at night. If you leave this control turned up then heat will escape while your storage heater is charging during the night, and so more electricity will be required.
2. Keep your input setting lower during warmer periods of weather.
3. Avoid using your boost setting unnecessarily
4. Avoid using supplementary plug-in heaters unnecessarily. It is cheaper to turn your input control up and use cheaper electricity where possible.
5. Whilst windows should be opened at times to provide adequate ventilation for your home, you should ensure they are not opened for unnecessarily long periods of time as this will result in heat escaping and the fabric of your home becoming cold. You can also keep more heat in your home during the evening by keeping blinds and curtains closed if possible.

Warning!

Please remember not to block or cover your storage heaters with furniture or clothing and allow plenty of space around your storage heaters for air to circulate. Storage heaters should not be used for drying clothes as this will result in a fire risk in your home!

Communal Storage Heaters

Storage heaters may be found in some common areas outside of your home, such as corridors, stairwells and communal living areas. We would ask that tenants do not adjust settings on these storage heaters, but instead raise any concerns with a member of staff. The costs associated with communal storage heaters are likely to be charged to a number of tenants, who will also benefit from this heat, and so staff will be best placed to consider the most appropriate heating settings.

Choice have procedures in place to reduce the amount of energy we use, to reduce our impact on the environment and to manage costs passed on to our tenants. At many of our housing schemes communal storage heaters will therefore be switched off during spring and summer months. This also helps to reduce overheating and discomfort for tenants, staff and visitors during warmer weather.

New Advanced Storage Heaters

Modern storage heaters with digital controls are now available which retain heat for longer periods of time. These can be used to replace older storage heaters, especially where alternatives such as natural gas heating are not available. Choice have modern storage heaters installed at a number of our properties and more information on using these systems is provided on our website.

For more support and advice please contact a member of our **Property Services Team** or our **Sustainability and Energy Management Team** on 0300 111 2211 or energy@choice-housing.org