

FACTSHEET 5

Winter Energy Challenges After Spinal Cord Injury



For people living with spinal cord injury, higher energy use is often unavoidable. The focus should be on:

- ✓ Maintaining a safe and comfortable home
- ✓ Improving energy efficiency where possible
- ✓ Accessing financial support and specialist advice



With the right combination of practical changes and external support, it is possible to better manage energy costs without compromising health or independence.



Winter can present additional challenges for people living with spinal cord injury. Reduced circulation, impaired temperature regulation, and spending longer periods indoors can make colder weather particularly difficult to manage safely and comfortably.



During colder months, heating needs are often higher and more consistent. This is both necessary and justified.

1 Winter heating priorities

- Maintain a stable indoor temperature throughout the day and night
- Avoid allowing rooms to become very cold before reheating them
- Use timers to warm rooms before getting out of bed or returning home
- Keep frequently used spaces consistently heated where possible

2 Reducing heat loss

- Keep curtains closed after dark to reduce draughts
- Use draught excluders around doors and windows
- Check insulation around pipes and hot water tanks
- Keep furniture slightly away from radiators so heat can circulate effectively

3 Managing moisture and ventilation

Cold weather can increase condensation and damp, especially where heating is used continuously.

- Open windows briefly each day where safe and practical
- Use extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms
- Avoid drying large amounts of laundry indoors in poorly ventilated rooms*

*Avoid air drying clothes indoors where ventilation is poor or where people in your household or the environment may be affected by moisture or humid conditions.

4 Power cuts and winter preparedness

People relying on powered equipment should plan ahead for winter disruption.

- Keep essential devices fully charged where possible
- Store emergency contact numbers in an accessible place
- Register with the Priority Services Register (PSR) for additional support during outages
- Keep blankets, warm clothing, and backup lighting easily available



Winter energy costs can place additional pressure on households affected by spinal cord injury. Seeking support early and preparing ahead for colder periods can help reduce stress and maintain safety and comfort.



Further Support

Contact Back Up's Energy Advisor on energy@backuptrust.org.uk or visit our website www.backuptrust.org.uk/energy.

Our advisor can discuss the challenges you are facing and offer advice, support and onward referrals to other organisations where appropriate.



Other Organisations

Energy Saving Trust — www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Scope — free disability energy advice service — www.scope.org.uk

Citizens Advice — support with billing, disputes, and energy rights — www.citizensadvice.org.uk