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A Mortgage Broker's goal is to ensure you get the optimum in mortgage value.

If you are considering moving, refinancing or consolidating your mortgage, please call to ensure you get the best low cost financing to suit your needs.

ecoENERGY Retrofit Grant Facts:

The maximum grant one can receive per home or multi-residential building is \$5,000; whereas the total grant amount available to one individual or entity for eligible properties over the life of the program is \$500,000. The average grant is expected to be more than \$1,000 and will yield an average 25% reduction in energy use and costs.

Energy-Saving Renovations for Your Home

Save Money, Energy - and the Environment

Improving the energy efficiency of your home can do more than reduce your energy use and help protect the environment. It can also help you reduce drafts and noise, fix moisture and condensation problems, improve your indoor air quality and comfort level - and help save your family money year round.

Regardless of where you live or the type of house your family calls home, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has a number of energy-saving tips you can use to help you save money, save the environment - and reduce your energy use by as much as 47 percent!

Useful Tips for Home Energy Conservation:

- Draftproof everywhere, including foundation walls, attic hatches and doors, around window and door frames, and around light fixtures and wiring.
- Consider upgrading to more energy-efficient windows to prevent heat loss, greatly improve comfort levels and reduce maintenance needs.
- Consider upgrading your furnace or boiler to a new high-efficiency unit.
- Cover hot water pipes within three metres (9ft) of the hot water tank with pipe insulation, and if possible, insulate all accessible hot water pipes.
- In the winter, install a programmable thermostat to



- lower the temperature at night and during the day when your home is unoccupied.
- Save energy and water by installing low-flush or dual-flush toilets, low flow faucets and shower heads, and front loading clothes washers that reduce water heating loads, water consumption and clothes dryer operation.

For more tips, visit www.cmhc.ca

(Source: CMHC)

EcoENERGY Retrofit Grants

ecoENERGY Retrofit for Homes provides home and property owners with grants of up to \$5,000 to offset the cost of making energy-efficiency improvements. ecoENERGY Retrofit grants apply to a host of measures that reduce energy consumption and provide for a cleaner environment,

from increasing insulation to upgrading a furnace.

Only homes that have undergone a residential energy efficiency assessment by an energy advisor certified by Natural Resources Canada will be eligible for grants. The ecoENERGY grant is based

on the type and number of energy improvements that have been made, and how much efficiency of the home has been improved. The grant is based on how effective that upgrade is in saving energy, not on the cost of the upgrade.

(Source: ecoACTION.gc.ca)

Home Renovation Financing Options



A personal line of credit is ideal for ongoing or long-term renovations since it lets you access your funds at any time.

Whether you intend to finance your renovation yourself or borrow money, talk to a financial advisor and to your lender before you make firm plans.

Whether you intend to finance your renovation yourself or borrow money, you should talk to a financial advisor and to your lender before you make firm plans. They can help you understand your options and advise on how much you can borrow. This information will help you plan realistically.

EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS

Your own resources: For smaller renovation projects, you may consider self-funding material costs, especially if you plan to do the work yourself.

Credit card: Likewise, you can use your credit card to pay for materials for smaller renovations. But be careful not to carry the balance for too long as credit card interest rates can exceed 18%.

Personal loan: With a personal loan, you pay regular payments of principal and

interest for a set period, typically one to five years. You also have the option of a fixed or variable interest rate for the term of the loan. The interest rate on a personal loan is typically less than that of a credit card. Unlike a line of credit, once you pay off your loan you will have to reapply to borrow any new funds needed.

Personal line of credit: It is ideal for ongoing or long-term renovations since it lets you access your funds at any time and provides a monthly statement to help track expenses. A line of credit offers lower interest rates than credit cards, and charges interest only on funds used each month. And, as you pay off your balance, you can access remaining funds, up to the line of credit's limit, without having to reapply.

Secured lines of credit and

home equity loans: These options offer all the advantages of regular lines of credits or loans, but are secured by your home's equity.

Mortgage refinancing: When funding major renovations, refinancing your mortgage lets you spread repayment over a long period at mortgage interest rates, which are usually much lower than credit card or personal loan rates. This type of financing can allow you to borrow up to 80% of your home's appraised value (less any outstanding mortgage balance).

This provides an overview of financing options available to you. But also make sure to research grants and rebates offered by the federal and provincial governments and local utilities to help fund your next renovation project.

(Source: CMHC)

Turn off Unnecessary Lights

Turning off lights that aren't being used is a simple and effective way to save energy. It does not require any equipment and the energy savings can be significant.

Affordability:

Turning off lights is free. Breaking old lighting habits is the challenge.

Cost Savings:

The moment a light is turned off, it stops using energy, so your savings add up by the minute. If every household in BC turned off a 100-watt in-

candescent light for four hours each day, each bulb could save 3.3 cents a day. It would also save the province 227 GWh, which could power Whistler for 12 years.

Health and Comfort:

Many people find cutting electric light in favour of natural light to be calming. Natural light covers the full light spectrum, which gives it a comfortable colour temperature and tone that is difficult to mimic.

Environmental Considerations: Since there is no equipment

required, there are no environmental impacts from product manufacture, shipping or disposal. Get everyone in your household into the habit.

Taking it further

- Ensure light switches are placed next to door frames to make turning off an easy motion as you exit a room.
- Install timers or photocells to control your outdoor lights.
- Turn off lights wherever there is adequate natural light.

(Source: BC Hydro)



Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs) use 75% less of the energy that incandescent bulbs use to deliver the same amount of light.

Finding the Right Home

There is no one "right way" to go about finding a home. But here are a few tips that may make the process a little easier and remove some of the anxiety associated with making what is, for most people, their largest single purchase in life.

- The first thing to do is determine how much you can afford and what type of home you want or need. Draw up a wish list that includes size, number of rooms, location, special features, etc.
- You'll also want to consider such things as proximity to schools, community centres, sports facilities, public transportation, hospitals,

libraries, shopping areas and your workplace.

- There are different ways to find the right home. First, there are many local magazines and brochures dedicated to advertising available properties. Most newspapers also have a real estate section.
- Quite often people will drive through certain neighborhoods, looking for properties for sale. This is a good idea if you already know where you want to live or a friend or family member has recommended a neighborhood, and may help you quickly find a suitable home.
- Many people in Canada also get in touch with a realtor or

builder when they are thinking about buying a home. They are trained to help you find a suitable home, and to assist you when you are ready to buy.

- The Internet has become indispensable tool when searching for properties in Canada. The primary website is MLS and it is run by the Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) on behalf of member realtors.
- Houses for sale by owner are not listed on MLS but can usually be found through individual websites or by visiting neighborhoods of interest and looking for 'For Sale by Owner' signs.

(Source: Genworth)



When house-hunting, talk to your family and friends and get their recommendations on great neighborhoods.

Canadians celebrate St. Patrick's Day

Saint Patrick's Day, aka *St. Paddy's Day* or *Paddy's Day*, is an annual feast day which celebrates Saint Patrick, one of the patron saints of Ireland, and is generally celebrated on March 17.

The day is the national holiday of Ireland and although it is widely celebrated by other countries, it is not considered an official holiday in those countries.

In Canada, bars across the country are packed on St. Patrick's Day with revellers.

The longest-running Saint Patrick's Day parade in Canada occurs each year in Montreal, Quebec. The

parades have been held in continuity since 1824; however, St. Patrick's Day itself has been celebrated in Montreal as far back as 1759 by Irish soldiers in the Montreal Garrison following the British conquest of New France.

In Canada, Saint Patrick's Day is an official holiday only in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Some groups, notably Guinness, have lobbied to make Saint Patrick's day a federal (national) holiday.

In the Province of Manitoba, the Irish Association of Manitoba runs an annual three day festival of music and culture based around St. Patrick's Day.

In the City of Toronto from 1919 to 1927, the Toronto Maple Leafs were known as the Toronto St. Patrick's and wore green jerseys. In 1999 when the Leafs played on Hockey Night in Canada on St. Patrick's Day, the Leafs wore the green St. Pats retro jersey. There is a large parade in the city's downtown core that attracts over 100,000 spectators.

Although the baseball season is still in the spring training phase when St. Patrick's Day rolls around, the Toronto Blue Jays wear green uniforms for the occasion.

(Source: Wikipedia)

From 1919 to 1927, the Toronto Maple Leafs hockey team were known as Toronto St. Patrick's and wore green jerseys.



Toronto St. Pat's: Former Maple Leafs captain, Mats Sundin wearing the vintage St. Pat's hockey jersey.