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National Energy Board

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→ Market Snapshot: Fuel poverty across Canada – lower energy efficiency in lower income households

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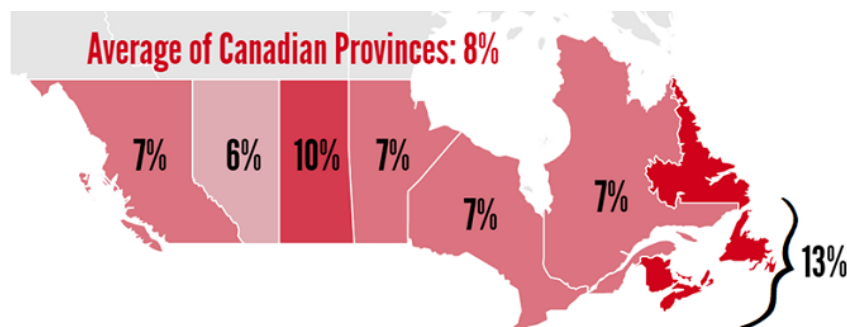
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In 2015, Canadian households spent an average of nearly 3% of their total income on electricity, natural gas and heating oil. A household may be described as experiencing [fuel poverty](#) when it spends more than 10% of its income on utilities. By this measure, an estimated 8% of Canadian households experience fuel poverty.

Not including the northern territories ¹, which face [unique energy challenges](#), households in the Atlantic provinces and Saskatchewan experience the most fuel poverty in Canada. Households in these provinces spent over \$500 more on utilities per year than the Canadian average of \$2 105 in 2015, and experienced fuel poverty rates of 13% (Atlantic provinces) and 10% (Saskatchewan).

Household fuel poverty rates in Canadian provinces in 2015

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▼ Source and Description

Source: [Statistics Canada](#)

Description: This map shows Canadian fuel poverty rates across provinces as of 2015, with the 4 Atlantic provinces aggregated into a single rate. The Atlantic provinces and Saskatchewan were the highest at 13% and 10%, respectively. The remaining provinces had the following rates: Ontario (7%), Manitoba (7%), British Columbia (7%), Alberta (6%), and Quebec (7%). The overall fuel poverty rate for Canada was 8%. This figure does not include the northern territories, which face unique energy challenges.

Household income levels are a primary determinant of fuel poverty. Lower income households are generally the most affected and usually spend a larger percentage of their income on utilities. Additionally, higher income households can more easily invest in improving their home's energy efficiency, and residential [electricity and natural gas intensity](#) ² tends to decrease in higher income households. To address fuel poverty, provincial and federal governments have introduced [energy efficiency rebates](#) targeted at both rental owners and low income households.

- 1 Data from the survey of household spending 2015 does not include the territories.
 - 2 [Table 3-5](#), [Table 3-7](#) has information on electricity and natural gas intensity per households in Canada.
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