



SUBMISSION GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

Home Energy Magazine offers authors \$0.20 per word up to a maximum of \$400 for printed Feature articles and \$150 for Trend and Column articles in print or online. Authors are asked to submit an invoice after publication. As a nonprofit organization, we always welcome in-kind trades in lieu of payment for your article. These trades include advertising, subscriptions, or the rights to a PDF or HTML copy of your article.

SUBMITTING TEXT AND IMAGES

Please submit the text of your article in a Word document as an e-mail attachment.

We ask that authors provide high-quality, high-resolution images (photos, figures, charts, graphs, and so on) with their draft submissions. Please don't embed graphics into your text file. Send them as separate JPG, TIFF, or PDF files. Send tables in Word or Excel files. In most cases, you should be able to send us image files as e-mail attachments. You can also transfer them directly to our FTP site (ask your editor for instructions), or by a file-sharing service such as DropBox or YouSendIt.

SECTIONS OF THE MAGAZINE

Trends are short stories explaining a single advance or research result.

- Length: 600–1,500 words.
- Artwork: 1–2 images, but send 4–6 so we can choose from among them. Photos are preferred.

Features are longer and provide more in-depth information. Features should have sidebars to explain technical concepts and equations, special vocabulary, a specific example of a general concept that is discussed, or a topical close-up.

- Length: 1,500–2,500 words.
- Artwork: 8–10 pieces, including photos and figures.

Columns provide readers with answers to specific questions or concerns.

- Length: 600–1,500 words.
- Artwork: 1–2 images, but send 4–6 so we can choose from among them. One head-and-shoulders photo of the columnist.

AUDIENCE

HEM addresses a well-defined niche: professionals who work in residential energy high performance design, construction, and retrofit. This includes home performance contractors, general contractors, HVAC contractors, energy auditors, program managers, weatherization crewmembers, energy officials, and manufacturers of energy-efficient products.

WRITING GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

Most Home Energy Magazine (HEM) authors come to us with well-developed ideas for articles. We help convert these ideas—your expertise—into the consistent, readable, and relevant voice that our readers have come to expect.

When you commit to producing an article for HEM, we'll assign an editor to your project. Their job is to streamline our work together. Feel free to contact your editor at any time to get advice and support.

OUTLINE YOUR ARTICLE

We recommend that you take time to develop an outline for your article before you begin to write. If you've already produced some of the content, don't worry: it's never too late to start outlining. A good outline should keep you on track, speed up your work, and help create these outcomes:

- Capture the reader's interest in the opening paragraph. If the reader is short of time, will they read the entire article?
- Identify and iterate the main point(s) of your article. What is the principal idea you hope the reader takes away?
- Clarify and describe your sub-topics. What does the reader need to know in order to understand your main point(s)?
- Take a consistent approach to each sub-topic, and cover them equally. Will the reader understand why you've chosen these sub-topics, and the relationships among them?
- Identify and fill holes in your research. What questions will the readers have when they get done reading your article? What performance metrics do you use for the home performance/energy efficient install/retrofit/upgrade described?
- Create a subjective narrative business practice of how the home performance/energy efficiency measure was profitably installed/maintained.
- If appropriate, explain how to sell customers/consumers the home performance/energy efficiency upgrade/retrofit (that is pricing, marketing, sales tips); and how you educate the consumer about the benefits of implementing the home performance/energy efficiency measure.
- Create a strong summary or call for action. What do you hope your readers will feel, think, or do after reading your article?

Once you have an outline completed, we recommend that you share it with your editor. This will help them understand your ideas and offer guidance while your article is still in development.

WRITE IN OUR STYLE

The style of our writing generally conforms to the *Chicago Manual of Style* or the *Associated Press Stylebook*. Your editor will assure that your final article follows these industry standards; if you're familiar with these guidelines, please follow them as you write your article.

CREATE BUILDING BLOCKS

Articles in HEM are directed toward busy working professionals. Like most readers these days, they have a relatively short attention span, and they may not have the patience to read thousands of words, however well-crafted, while the author gets around to making their point. This fast-moving approach is especially the case for online readers.

To meet the needs of both our print and online readers, we suggest that you write in such a way that each section of your article would be an interesting read all by itself. This building-block style will keep readers engaged as they learn about one topic after another. When you write in building blocks, it also allows HEM editors to repost teasers from your article to *Home Energy* online, Home Energy Pros, and other social media platforms.

Use descriptive headings for each section of your article. Good headings allow the reader to skim ahead and see where your narrative will lead them. Headings also prepare the reader for each new idea.

Short and succinct ideas are the most attractive to today's readers. If you write with a strong outlining process, and create headings to match, you'll find it easier to create content that suits Home Energy Magazine and other modern media outlets.

KEEP IT CONVERSATIONAL, DIRECT, AND ACTIVE

The tone of HEM is conversational. We strive to publish articles that are welcoming, informational, and approachable both for new and seasoned members of the home performance community. A few keynotes:

- **Avoid using excessive industry jargon or acronyms** in your writing, even though you may be writing to industry readers. When you do use an industry-specific term or acronym, please define it at the first occurrence.
- **Write in an active voice.** Especially in housing, nothing happens by itself! Tell your readers about the people who are engaged with the actions you describe. Be sure that the subject of each sentence is directly involved with the verb.
- **Use short, simple sentences.** If you're having trouble composing a long, complicated sentence that makes sense, break it into two.

PRACTICE STORYTELLING

Good authors have information to share. Great authors know how to make it relevant and interesting to their readers. Oftentimes the difference is in having a narrative, or story, through which to share the information.

When you're ready to write an article, consider both the information you want to share *and* the people who have been involved in creating, collecting, or interpreting that information. Include their stories in your narrative, describe their motivations, and tell our readers how their lives could be affected by the information you present.

FOLLOW YOUR ARTICLE AFTER IT'S PUBLISHED

We'll publish your article online at homeenergy.org soon after the print version arrives in mailboxes. We'll enable comments there so readers can offer their opinions and ideas. Please check online periodically to see if you have current comments that you'd like to respond to. If you don't have access to the HEM website, ask your editor to give you guest access.

We also encourage you to join [Home Energy Pros](#), the de facto social media site for HEM and the home performance community. This is a good place to post a short summary or abstract of your article to generate conversation around your article and the topics you've introduced.

For some articles, we'll post teasers to *Home Energy* online in the weeks and months leading up to publication. This offers you a good opportunity to create sustained dialogue on your topic that leads up to the publication of the full article. Your editor will let you know if we publish teasers for your article.

For many authors, the publication of an article in HEM opens a long-term dialogue with friends, colleagues, and clients. One of the best ways to make this happen is to share your article in creative ways across a range of social media. Ask your editor if you'd like help making this happen.

RESOURCES

One of the best pieces of guidance we've seen for good simple writing is the [Federal Plain Language Guidelines](#). Don't be put off by the stuffy-sounding title: it offers strong and relevant tips for anyone who cares about clear communication.