

ENERGY-SAVING TIPS

Follow these simple, cost-effective tips to stay cool and reduce energy bills:

- Set your air-conditioning thermostat at 78°F or higher during the summer season. Each degree above 75° saves you 3% of the energy used to cool your home.
- Block out heat by keeping blinds or curtains closed during the day, especially on south facing windows.
- A unit operating in the shade uses as much as 10 percent less electricity than the same one operating in the sun.
- Place your air conditioner in a central window, rather than a corner window, to allow for better air movement.
- A properly sized air conditioner will operate more efficiently and dehumidify more effectively. An oversized unit will cycle on and off more frequently. Short cycling reduces an air conditioning system's life, and a short cycling system will not reduce humidity effectively. Undersized equipment can reduce the efficiency of air distribution and accelerate wear on system components, leading to premature failure.
- A dirty filter will increase energy use and can damage the air conditioner leading to early failures, so check the filter every month and replace as needed.
- ENERGY STAR[®] qualified room air conditioners use up to 25 percent less energy than a standard new model and up to 40 percent less energy than a model that is more than 10 years old. Look for a high Energy Efficiency Ratio (EER). Units with high EERs cost less to operate. Turn in your old, room air conditioner to your local waste management facility and turn on a new ENERGY STAR air conditioner.
- Use ovens, washing machines, dryers and dishwashers in the early morning or late at night when it's generally cooler outside.
- Remove air conditioners in the fall or install a quality plastic cover.
- Clean the cooling and condenser fans plus the coils to keep your air conditioner operating efficiently and check the filter every month and replace as needed.
- Seal spaces around the air conditioner with caulking to prevent cool air from escaping
- Instead of just turning your electronics off, it is better to unplug them because even when they're "off" they still draw electricity from the outlet - something known as a "phantom load."
- Save electricity and reduce waste heat by shutting off lights. Seldom used home electronics should actually be unplugged from the wall. Items like DVD players, VCRs and cordless phones use 40 percent of their energy while in the off position to power functions like clocks and remote controls.
- Avoid leaving transformers and charging units for appliances and battery-operated devices on (such as cell phones and tools) when they aren't being used.
- When you shut down your computer, don't forget to turn off the monitor - it can use *twice as much energy* as the computer!
- Defrost your refrigerator regularly so it can operate more efficiently, and do so only on weekends to avoid peak load.
- Vacuum and clean the condenser coils, motor and evaporator pan of your refrigerator once or twice a year, and leave space between your refrigerator and the surrounding walls and cabinets to allow air to circulate around the coils.
- Keep your refrigerator away from the stove and heat registers. By being next to those items, you're making your refrigerator work twice as hard and decreasing its overall efficiency.
- Use your microwave oven as much as possible in the summer rather than your regular oven. You'll stay cooler and save energy.
- To save even more energy, defer use until off-peak hours, after 6:30 pm and before 9:30 am.