

Power Conservation Tips

The following are tips that can help you save energy, thereby reducing your power bill. Taking the same measures will also ensure that your heat and water last longer during power outages, winter and wind storms.

Home Insulation

- Caulk, seal or weather-strip all seams, cracks and openings to the outside.
- Insulate the ceiling of your home. Either a blown loose-fill or fiberglass batts will do the job. Insulate the walls of your home. After ceiling and floor insulation, wall insulation is an important conservation measure to include.
- Insulate the floor of your home if it is above a cold crawl space or basement. Floor insulation helps control heating bills and increases your home's comfort.
- If windows are single-paned, for a low-cost temporary fix, consider installing inexpensive tape-up interior storm windows. (This will seal air leaks and can reduce window heat loss by as much as 50 percent).

Hot Water Pipe Insulation

- Install pipe insulation on all exposed hot water pipes.
- Install insulation on the first three feet of exposed cold water pipe that is connected to the water heater.

Heating

- Turn your thermostat to 68 degrees Fahrenheit during the day.
- Turn your heat to 55° degrees Fahrenheit at night when you go to bed or when you are not at home.
- Clean or change your furnace filters every two months.
- Close your drapes or blinds at night to keep heat inside and open them during the day to allow the sun in to help warm your home.
- When your fireplace is not in use, keep the damper shut and the glass door closed to minimize the amount of heat that escapes up the chimney.
- Keep exterior doors and windows closed when the heat is on.
- Keep your warm air outlets and heaters clean. Arrange your furniture and draperies so they don't block the airflow from the registers or heaters.
- Heat only the areas of your home you actually use.
- If you have a waterbed, set the heater at the lowest comfortable temperature. Place an insulation board under the heated waterbed. Keep the waterbed covered with a comforter.

Lighting

- Replace incandescent light bulbs with new energy efficient compact fluorescent lamps. Some of the new models are safe to use on dimmers and with electronic controls.
- Reduce the wattage of incandescent light bulbs that are used most of the time.
- Use timers or light sensors so security lights are on only when you want them lit.
- Turn off the lights that are not needed and in unused rooms.
- Dust your light bulbs and clean the fixture covers to get the most light out of your fixtures.

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Hot Water Heating, Washing and Drying

- Set your water heater thermostat at 120 degrees Fahrenheit or the low setting.
- Take showers rather than baths to reduce hot water usage.
- Inspect your pressure/ temperature relief valve and replace it if it is leaking.
- Wash only full loads in your dishwasher.
- Don't use Rinse-Hold setting on your dishwasher. It wastes 3- to 7-gallons of hot water. Do use Air Dry setting and other power-saving features on your dishwasher.
- When purchasing a new clothes washer, consider models that save energy and water. They save 40 to 60 percent on energy and water consumption.
- If your clothes washer has a water level selection, use the lowest practical level. Wash full loads when possible. Use cold-water rinse for all loads.
- Try cold water washing using cold-water detergent.
- Clean the lint screen on your dryer before every load.
- Repair leaking or dripping faucets.
- Install efficient showerheads that use 2.5 gallons per minute or less.
- Turn off the breaker to the electric water tank at the main switch box if you are going to be gone a week or more (except in freezing weather).

Cooking

- For warming foods, use your microwave in place of your range oven.
- When you use your oven, cook more than one item at a time.
- Never use an oven or range burner to heat a kitchen.
- Use flat-bottom pans for best contact with the heat. Use tight fitting lids to keep the steam in the pan.
- Preheat your oven only 5- to 8-minutes when baking. Use a timer to reduce the number of times you open the oven door during baking.

Refrigeration, Freezing

- Keep your refrigerator at 38 degrees Fahrenheit and your freezer at 0 degrees Fahrenheit. Your freezer will work more efficiently if you keep it full.
- Defrost your freezer when ice or frost builds up to 1/2 inch or more.
- If you have an older refrigerator or freezer, listen to see if the motor/compressor runs constantly. If so, you may need repair service to check for low refrigerant. Another cause may be a leaky door gasket.
- Vacuum or brush your freezer or refrigerator coils at least every 6 months. Coils are on the back or underneath the appliance.
- Check your refrigerator and freezer door gaskets periodically for signs of deterioration, and replace them when necessary.
- Read the Energy Guide Label when purchasing new major appliances. Compare the energy savings of similar models. A wise investment now can mean many years of energy savings.