

Home Energy Efficiency Tips

HEATING AND AIR CONDITIONING

Clean or replace filters at least once a month:

- Dirty filters make your system work harder and run longer than necessary.
- They also encourage the buildup of mold and mildew, making cleaning more difficult

Shade outside air conditioning units:

- A/C units shaded by trees or other means work more efficiently and use up to 10% less electricity.

Clean your AC's condenser/evaporator coils at the beginning of the season

- Clean coils lower your energy costs, extend the unit's life and provide cleaner air for you to breathe.
- The fin coils on the outside AC unit can be washed with a hose.
- Coils on inside units may be difficult to get to and may require a trained technician

Keep debris and high grass away from the condenser

- These obstacles block the airflow to the unit. Blockage makes the condenser work harder and run longer

Set your thermostat at 78 in the summer and 68 in the winter

- Each degree cooler or warmer will increase your energy use by 6 to 8%. For instance, setting your thermostat at 72 in the summer could increase energy use by up to 40%
- One of the best ways to save energy dollars is to use less air conditioning and heating

If you have central air conditioning, do not close vents in unused rooms

- This could increase pressure and cause leaks in your ducts.
- This does not apply to homes or apartments with window units where closing off unused rooms will reduce cooling costs and increase comfort

Consider new high efficiency air conditioners and heat pumps

- They use up to 40% less electricity than older models for the same amount of running time

APPLIANCES

Lower the thermostat on your water heater to 120 degrees.

- This can save as much as \$45 per year. Next to heating and cooling, water heaters use the most energy in a household (14% to 20%).

Wrap your heater with an insulation blanket.

- This can reduce its energy use by 10% to 15%. An insulating blanket will pay for itself in one year or less.

Turn down or shut off your water heater when you will be away for extended periods.

Consider an energy efficient refrigerator.

- Refrigerators more than 10 years old use up to 50% more energy than new energy efficient models.
- Behind heating and cooling and water heaters, refrigerators and freezers are the biggest household energy users because they run all the time.

Choose refrigerator and freezer styles carefully.

- Side-by-side refrigerators use about 45% more energy than refrigerators with a separate freezer on top.
- Upright freezers use 10% to 25% more energy than chest styled freezers because they lose more cold air when opened.
- Freezers that must be manually defrosted use 35% to 40% less energy than comparable frost-free models.

Adjust the temperature setting.

- Temperature settings that are too low cause refrigerators and freezers to run more than needed. The refrigerator temperature should be 36 to 38 degrees. The freezer temperature should be 0 to 5 degrees. To test: place an ordinary household thermometer in the refrigerator for 10 to 15 minutes. Be ready to read it the moment you open the door. Repeat the test for your freezer.
- Refrigerator temperatures set at even 10 degrees lower than recommended can increase energy use by as much as 25%.

Make sure your refrigerator and freezer doors seal properly.

- To test: close door over a dollar bill. If the dollar pulls out easily, the seal around the door may need replacing or the door latch may need adjusting.

Defrost (manual) freezers before the frost exceeds a quarter inch thick.

- Greater frost buildup makes the freezer work harder, running longer than necessary.

Gently vacuum off the refrigerator's condenser coils about every three months.

- The coils are located in the back or under the bottom of the refrigerator. Excessive dust buildup will make the refrigerator work harder and run longer.

Adjust the location of your freezer.

- Freezers can use up to 25% more energy if located in hot temperatures (such as in your garage during the summertime) than if they operate in normal household temperature conditions.

Let foods cool before placing in refrigerator unless the recipe specifies otherwise.

- Warm food will cause your refrigerator to run more.

Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator rather than on a counter top.

- This is safer plus frozen items will help cool the refrigerator as they defrost and may help reduce its running time.

Freezers work better fully loaded.

Dry loads of clothes back to back.

- Take advantage of heat built up in the dryer.
- Clean the lint filter after every load. Your dryer will dry more efficiently, requiring less running time.

Close the door to the dryer room.

- Keep from heating up the house.

Unplug seldom-used appliances such as extra color televisions, video tape players and computers when not in use.

- Even off, they continue to draw as much as 10 watts of electricity (7-kilowatt hours per month each).

Consider a laptop computer.

- They use significantly less energy than desktop models.

LIGHTS

Turn off unneeded lights, even when leaving a room for a short time.

- Lights generate heat that increases room temperature.
- Lighting accounts for about 10% of your electrical use.

Consider fluorescent light (CFLs) bulbs.

- CFLs use 70% less electricity than regular light bulbs, give off five times more light, emit 90% less heat and last 10 times longer.
- On average, a fluorescent light bulb will save about \$50 in electricity costs over its life.

Clean lampshades and light bulbs.

- Dust can reduce lighting levels by as much as 50%.

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