

36 Ways To Conserve Energy

Saving Energy And Money In Your Home

The major energy users in your home - heating system, air conditioning, electric water heater, refrigerator, dryer, lighting - all contribute to your overall electric utility bill. Here are some tips to help you use them more efficiently, lower your energy use and save money on your monthly electric bill.

Caution: Some people, including the elderly, infants and persons with circulatory problems, may require higher indoor temperatures (above 65 degrees F. at all times) to avoid health problems. Please seek the advice of your physician regarding winter and summer thermostat settings in your home.

Your Heating System

1. Keep your heating equipment well tuned with periodic maintenance by a professional service representative.
2. Use kitchen, bath and other ventilating fans sparingly. You can blow away a houseful of heat in just two to three hours using ventilating fans. Turn them off when their job is complete.
3. Set your thermostat at 68 degrees F. during the day and 60 degrees F. at night. You can save 3 percent on your heating costs for every degree you reduce the temperature below 70 degrees F. for the entire heating season. Special Advice to Heat Pump Owners: Heat pumps need to stay at a constant setting, unless you have a programmable electronic heat pump thermostat with adaptive recovery. Check with your heating or air conditioning contractor to determine the type of thermostat you have.
4. Turn down your thermostat at night or when you're away for more than four hours during the day. Do not turn off your heating system entirely as this may cause pipes to freeze.
5. If you have a simple open-masonry fireplace, consider installing a glass screen, a convective grate, a radiant grate or a fireplace insert. They'll help cut down on the loss of warm air through the fireplace chimney.
6. Maintain proper air circulation. Keep heating supply registers and cold-air return registers clear of draperies and furniture.
7. Clean or replace the filter in your forced-air heating system each month. Foam filters can be rinsed with water, but be sure they are dry before replacing. Fiberglass filters need to be replaced periodically.
8. Keep draperies and shades open during the day to let the sunshine in; close them at night.
9. Check the duct work for air leaks about once a year if you have a forced-air heating system. To do this, feel around the duct joints for escaping air when the fan is on. Relatively small leaks can be easily repaired by covering holes or cracks with duct tape. More stubborn problems may require caulking as well as taping.
10. Dust or vacuum radiator surfaces frequently. Dust and grime impede the flow of heat.
11. Don't place lamps or television sets near your thermostat. Heat from these appliances is sensed by the thermostat and could cause your furnace to shut off sooner than is needed for adequate warmth.

Hot Water Heater

12. Buy a high-efficiency water heater. When you need a new water heater, purchase a unit with a high Energy Factor (EF) rating. EF ratings-such as those of .91 and above-correspond with greater efficiency. The higher the rating, the more efficiently the unit will operate.
13. Turn down the water heater temperature dial to 120 degrees F. or less, or to the "warm" setting. If you have a dishwasher, be sure to check your manufacturer's instructions for minimum water temperature.
14. Insulate the outside of your water heater with an insulation blanket to reduce heat loss and save \$10 to 20 a year.

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Kitchen Energy Savers

15. Use cold water rather than hot to operate your food disposal. Cold water also helps get rid of grease by solidifying it, so it can then be ground up and washed away.
16. Install an aerator in your kitchen sink faucet.
17. Never boil water in an uncovered pan. Water will come to a boil faster and use less energy in a kettle or covered pan.
18. Keep range-top burners and reflectors clean. They will reflect heat better, and you will save energy.
19. Match the size of the pan to the heating element. More heat will get to the pan, and less will be lost to the surrounding air.
20. Get in the habit of turning off the elements on surface units on your electric stove several minutes before completing the allotted cooking time. The heating element will stay hot long enough to finish the cooking without wasting electricity.
21. Turn off the oven five to 10 minutes before cooking time is up and let trapped heat finish the cooking.
22. When using the oven, cook as many foods as you can at one time.
23. Avoid opening the oven door repeatedly to check food that is cooking. This allows heat to escape and results in the use of more energy to complete the cooking of your food. Instead, watch the clock or use a timer.
24. Use small electric cooking appliances or ovens for small meals rather than the kitchen range or oven. They use less energy.
25. Use pressure cookers and microwave ovens if you have them. They save energy by reducing cooking times.
26. Don't preheat the oven unless absolutely necessary, and then for no more than 10 minutes.
27. Avoid using the broiler. It is a big energy user.
28. Thaw frozen foods before cooking. It will save time and energy.

Dishwashing

29. When buying a dishwasher, look for an energy-efficient model with air power and/or overnight dry settings. These features automatically turn off the dishwasher after the rinse cycle. This can save you up to 10 percent of your dishwashing energy costs.
30. Scrape dishes and rinse with cold water from the faucet before loading them into the dishwasher. Avoid using the dishwasher's pre-rinse cycle.
31. Be sure your dishwasher is full but not overloaded when you turn it on.
32. Don't use the "rinse-hold" on your machine for just a few soiled dishes. It uses three to seven gallons of hot water each time you use it.

Refrigerator/Freezer

33. Don't keep your refrigerator or freezer too cold. Recommended temperatures: 38 degrees F. to 40 degrees F. for fresh food compartments of the refrigerator; 5 degrees F. for the freezer compartment. Separate freezers for long-term storage should be kept at zero degrees F. 68. Open the refrigerator or freezer door only when necessary, and don't hold it open any longer than necessary.
34. Regularly defrost manual-defrost refrigerators and freezers. Frost buildup increases the amount of energy needed to keep the refrigerator at its proper temperature. Never allow frost to build up more than 1/4 of an inch.
35. If possible, don't place your refrigerator or freezer in direct sunlight or near the stove.
36. Make sure your refrigerator door seals are airtight. Test them by closing the door on a piece of paper or dollar bill so it is half in and half out of the refrigerator. If you can pull the paper or dollar out easily, the hinge may need adjusting or the seal may need replacing.