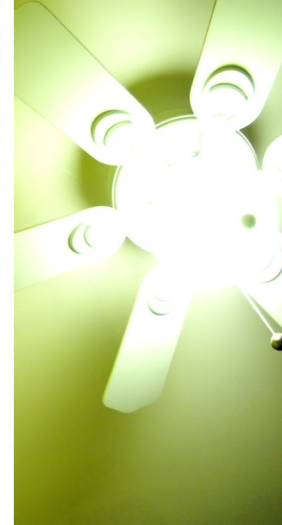


Energy Saving Tips



With another Texas Summer upon us, the days are getting hotter. Taking some simple and inexpensive actions around the house can help you save energy and money this season..

Operate Your Thermostat Efficiently

- Set your thermostat as high as comfortably possible in the summer. The smaller the difference between the indoor and outdoor temperatures, the lower your overall cooling bill will be.
- Raise your thermostat to keep your house warmer than normal when you are away, and lower the thermostat setting to 78°F (26°C) only when you are at home and need cooling. A programmable thermostat can make it easy to set back your temperature.
- Avoid setting your thermostat at a colder setting than normal when you turn on your air conditioner. It will not cool your home any faster and could result in excessive cooling and unnecessary expense.

Keep Your Cooling System Running Efficiently

- Schedule regular maintenance for your cooling equipment.
- Avoid placing lamps or TV sets near your room air-conditioning thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause the air conditioner to run longer than necessary.
- Keep the outside air conditioner unit clear so that air can circulate freely around the unit.
- Vacuum registers regularly to remove any dust buildup. Ensure that furniture and other objects are not blocking the airflow through your registers.
- Replace air filters at regularly scheduled times.

Use Fans and Ventilation Strategies to Cool Your Home

- Using a ceiling fan along with your air conditioning, will allow you to lower the temperature in a room about 4°F with no reduction in comfort.
- Turn off ceiling fans when you leave the room. Remember that fans cool people, not rooms, by creating a wind chill effect.
- When you shower or take a bath, use the bathroom fan to remove the heat and humidity from your home. Your laundry room might also benefit from spot ventilation. Make sure bathroom and kitchen fans are vented to the outside (not just to the attic).
- Install Radiant Barrier to cool down your attic and keep the house cooler.

Keep Hot Air from Leaking Into Your Home

- Seal cracks and openings to prevent warm air from leaking into your home.
- Add caulk or weatherstripping to seal air leaks around leaky doors and windows.

Use Your Windows to Gain Cool Air and Keep Out Heat

- On those cool summer nights, turn off your cooling system and open your windows while sleeping. When you wake in the morning, shut the windows and blinds to capture the cool air.
- Install window coverings to prevent heat gain through your windows.
- Closing your drapes or shades during the day helps to keep unwanted heat out and cooler air in.

Don't Heat Your Home with Appliances and Lighting

- Turn off lights in unoccupied rooms.
- On hot days, avoid using the oven; cook on the stove, use a microwave oven, or grill outside.
- Install efficient lighting that runs cooler. Only about 10% to 15% of the electricity that incandescent lights consume results in light—the rest is turned into heat.
- Take advantage of daylight instead of artificial lighting, but avoid direct sunlight.
- Wash only full loads of dishes and clothes. Consider air drying both dishes and clothing.
- Take short showers instead of baths.
- Minimize activities that generate a lot of heat, such as running a computer, burning open flames, running a dishwasher, and using hot devices such as curling irons or hair dryers. Even stereos and televisions will add some heat to your home.

Lower Your Water Heating Costs

Water heating can account for 14%-25% of the energy consumed in your home.

- Turn down the temperature of your water heater to the warm setting (120°F). You'll not only save energy, you'll avoid scalding your hands.
- Don't run water when not in use, turn off while washing hands, brushing teeth, etc.

Information provided by the U.S. Department of Energy, www.energy.gov

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