Tips to Lower Your Electric Bill Today

Summer Cooling Tips

You can save up to 3% on your cooling costs for every degree you raise your thermostat in the summer. Raising the thermostat from 73 to 78 degrees can mean savings of up to 15% in cooling costs. Using ceiling fans to blow air down will keep you comfortable at a higher temperature.

- Avoid cooling rooms that are not occupied.
- Keep drapes and blinds closed during the day.
- Regularly change the air filters on your air conditioner.

Hot Water Tips

The water heater is the second largest energy user in most homes.

- Lower the water temperature to 120 degrees F. Don't forget that many electric water heaters have two thermostats to adjust. Turn the heater off when on vacation.
- Fix leaking faucets.
- Use low-flow shower heads and faucets.

Refrigerator & Freezer Tips

Refrigerators and freezers can use 20% of household energy.

- Clean the condenser coils at the back or bottom of the refrigerator to maximize cooling.
- Cover and wrap foods before storing. Uncovered foods and liquids release moisture and drive up electricity costs.
- Got a second, older refrigerator or freezer in the garage? Unplug it and lock the door (for safety). Leaving it on can cost an extra $130 per year. Use it only when you need extra food storage capability.

Lighting Tips

Lighting can account for about 15% of a home's electric use.

- Replace lights in your home with compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) or light emitting diodes (LEDS). These last many times longer and use 75% less electricity.
- Turn off lights when you leave the room.
- Use motion-detector and photo-sensor outdoor lighting.
- Use daylight in place of electric lights.

Laundry Tips

Ninety percent of the energy your washer uses goes toward heating water.

- Run the washer only when you have a full load of laundry, using cold water whenever possible.
- Dry heavy and light fabrics separately to keep drying time to a minimum. Mixing different weight fabrics causes the dryer to run longer.

- Clean the lint filter before each load. Lint buildup blocks air flow and lengthens drying time.
- Hang clothes on a clothesline instead of using the dryer.

Dishwashers Tips

Eighty percent of the energy used in automatic dishwashers goes toward heating water.

- Run the dishwasher only when it is full. Running a half-filled dishwasher twice uses two times as much energy as running a full load once.
- Use the energy saving control on many dishwashers to turn off the heat during the drying cycle, or open the dishwasher after the rinse cycle to let the dishes air dry.

Cooking Tips

- Use your microwave oven, toaster oven, or slow-cooker, instead of your conventional stove/oven. These use substantially less energy than regular ovens.
- Minimize preheat time and don't peek! You lose up to 25 degrees of heat every time you open the oven door.
- Use the smallest pan necessary for stovetop cooking. It takes less energy to heat them. And, remember to cook with lids on to keep the heat in the pan.

Other Electricity Saving Tips

- Unplug "energy vampires" -- equipment such as computers, TVs, cell phone chargers, etc. that continue to use electricity even when off or in the sleep mode.
- Use stairs – two floors down, one floor up – instead of using the elevator.

You can also save electricity by making some modest investments.

- Have your central air conditioner tuned up to operate at its highest efficiency.
- Install a smart thermostat and use the set-back feature when you don't need as much cooling.
- Look for the Energy Star label when purchasing appliances and equipment.
- Make sure air leaks are sealed around windows and doors to keep hot and humid air out.
- Make sure you have the recommended amount of insulation. High efficiency buildings should have R-49 in attics, R-19 in walls, and R-25 in crawlspaces.

For more energy savings information, see The Virginia Energy Savers Handbook at www.dmme.virginia.gov.

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