

Your municipal electric system offers summer energy-saving tips to help beat the heat

With temperatures expected to reach the mid to upper 90s this week, your municipal electric system offers these tips to help you conserve energy and save on your electric bill:

- Try to schedule any activity using hot water (laundry, showers, baths, dishwashing) for before 2 p.m. or after 6 p.m.;
- Set your thermostat at 78 degrees or slightly higher. The monthly savings could be between 3 and 5 percent. Raise the thermostat higher when away from home for extended periods. By installing a programmable thermostat, you can save money every month by lowering energy use when you do not need it;
- Clean or change the air conditioner filter regularly. A dirty filter cuts down on air flow and reduces efficiency. Air conditioners are the biggest source of electric use during the summer. In many homes, air conditioning accounts for more than half the electric bill;
- Keep your curtains and blinds closed during the day to reduce heat from direct sunlight;
- Using the microwave, slow cooker and outdoor grill for cooking will reduce demand for power;
- Use room or ceiling fans to circulate air;
- Add insulation in the attic. Better attic insulation can save as much as 30 percent on cooling and heating costs;
- Make sure attic and crawl spaces are adequately ventilated. Poor ventilation will add to your summer cooling costs. It also can trap moisture in your attic, making insulation less effective;
- Use compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) instead of incandescent lamps when possible. CFLs last about 10 times longer and use about one-fourth

the electricity of incandescent bulbs. CFLs can save 60 percent or more on lighting costs;

- Cleaning your dryer lint filter before every load helps dry your clothes more quickly, which means you save energy and money;
- When going on vacation, turn your water heater thermostat to low. It will save you a few dollars;
- Your mother was right. (“What do you think — we own the power company?!”) Turn off everything not in use: lights, TVs, computers. Results show that the average owner of a computer system spends about \$100 per year in electricity bills, if the computer is left on 24/7. This cost, however, does not figure in the electricity used by printers, scanners, and other devices;
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