

Energy-Saving Tips for Your Home and Family

As the seasons change, it pays to be energy efficient. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the average U.S. household spends about \$1,800 per year on home energy. As a homeowner, there are several measures you can take to control, or lower, your monthly utility bills. Some of the suggestions offered below will improve the way your house uses energy; and some are ways you and your family can be more energy efficient. Be sure to check in with your local NeighborWorks organization for more energy-saving tips. To find your local NeighborWorks organization, visit www.nw.org.

For Your Home

- ▶ **Monitor your heating and cooling systems.** Be sure to replace the filters once a month to maintain an adequate and clean air flow and in turn reduce energy costs. Keep registers and vents free of dust, dirt and other blockages. If you have rooms that are not used often, keep their registers and doors closed; doing so will save your system from heating or cooling unused rooms.
- ▶ **Add or replace insulation.** Appropriate insulation can save you up to 30 percent on your heating bill, according to the Alliance to Save Energy. Insulation of your attic, floors, exterior walls, and crawl spaces can help prevent energy loss. Be sure to choose high-quality materials, and replace matted or torn insulation to maximize its effectiveness.
- ▶ **Caulk or add weather stripping around windows and doors.** Your home may have small openings around doors and windows that allow for heat or cool air loss. Caulk and weather stripping can reduce energy loss and protect your home from moisture damage.
- ▶ **Install ceiling fans.** A ceiling fan will help more evenly distribute warm and cool air generated by your heat pump, furnace, or A/C unit throughout the year.
- ▶ **Attic fans or vents** can keep hot or cold air from being trapped in your attic.
- ▶ **If you need to buy new appliances**, get the most energy efficient models you can afford. Look for household appliances that have earned the Energy Star® – these products have met the guidelines set by the Environmental Protection Agency and DOE. According to the Alliance to Save Energy, households that replace existing equipment Energy Star® qualified products can cut annual energy bills by as much as 30 percent, or more than \$450 per year.
- ▶ **Install storm windows and storm doors with screens for spring and summer use.** Storm doors and windows can reduce energy usage by serving as a barrier to your outdoor environment.



- ▶ **Try not to keep the thermostat too high in winter or too low in summer.** Energy experts recommend that you keep the thermostat around 78 degrees in the warm season, and 72 degrees in the cooler months. For each degree you lower your thermostat you can save up to five percent on the heating portion of your energy bill, according to the Alliance to Save Energy.
- ▶ **Close the refrigerator door completely to conserve energy.** The refrigerator is one of the most used appliances – it runs 24 hours a day.
- ▶ **Do not leave doors and windows open** when the heat or air conditioning are running.
- ▶ **Run your washer or dishwasher only** when they are full. According to Water – Use It Wisely, doing so could save as much as 1,000 gallons of water a month per household.

For Your Family

- ▶ **Turn out lights not in use** to save energy and money.
- ▶ **Let Mother Nature light your home.** Sunlight is often brighter than bulbs, and it's free.
- ▶ **Dress appropriately no matter the season,** so you can keep your thermostat at the lowest comfortable setting in the winter, and warmest comfortable setting in the summer.
- ▶ **Shut off the water** when you brush your teeth, wash dishes by hand, or do other chores. Turning off the water while you brush your teeth alone can save as much as four gallons a minute, according to Water – Use It Wisely.
- ▶ **Plan meals** so that you can bake more than one item at a time.
- ▶ **Try cooking with the lids on your pots** to conserve energy used while cooking.
- ▶ **Use a microwave or toaster oven** to heat smaller portions, rather than a conventional oven.

