



As the heat and humidity of summer arrives, the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources shares tips to provide consumers with the secrets to help keep cool, conserve energy, and reduce utility bills.

"There are smart tips consumers can take during the long days of sunshine and Minnesota's humidity that will help keep your home cool and keep energy bills lower," said Commerce Commissioner Mike Rothman. "Basic steps to improve energy conservation and energy efficiency are among the most effective ways to reduce energy use and decrease utility bills. Taking steps to save energy is good for our environment and our economy, and many of these steps are no- or low-cost measures that translate to real cost savings."

Check out the following tips to keep cool, save money, and help prevent unnecessary power outages by easing high demand of electric power this summer.

Twelve steps to help save energy, save money

1. Cool Efficiently. Replace old inefficient air conditioning systems with high efficiency, ENERGY STAR models (www.energystar.gov). For central air conditioners, look for a Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER) rating of 14.5 or more.

2. Get an Advanced Energy Assessment. Find out how your house is working. An advanced energy assessment will provide an evaluation of your home's energy use, insulation levels, air leakage, and mechanical systems. Utility companies and private contractors can provide assessments; check with your utility or the Minnesota Building Performance Association at www.mbpa.us

Beat the heat, conserve energy, save money, and stay cool

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3. Seal Air Leaks. Over half of our home's energy is used to heat and cool our homes. To keep the cool air in, it is critical to reduce air leaks in attics, walls, windows and doors. An advanced energy assessment will identify the locations and methods for sealing air leaks.

4. Use a Programmable Thermostat. Install and use a programmable thermostat with your central air conditioner and set it to 78 degrees F.

5. Maintain HVAC Systems. Heating, air conditioning and ventilation systems need to be inspected annually to ensure they are working efficiently. Change furnace and air conditioning filters regularly, and keep air conditioner coils clean and free of dust and dirt to increase efficiency and lifetime use.

6. Enroll in Utility Energy-Saver Programs. Have your utility cycle your central air conditioner during times of peak electrical demand to reduce the need for additional generation—and you will get a discount on your utility bill. Some utility programs, such as [Xcel Energy's Saver's Switch](#) program, install a remote-controlled switch to reduce central air use a little at high-peak times.

7. Keep the Cool Air Inside. Keep shades pulled and doors and windows closed during the daytime when temperatures are at the warmest. On cool days and nights—when the outdoor temperature is cooler than indoors—open windows to let cool air in.

8. Use Fans. Use fans to cool your body or to pull cooler air in through windows at night. The use of ceiling fans and oscillating fans in hot weather will create a wind-chill effect that can make you feel cooler and reduce the need for air conditioning.

9. Air-Dry Dishes and Clothes. Reduce the electricity use of your dishwasher and clothes dryer by air drying dishes and clothes. Air-dry your dishes or use the dishwasher's energy-saving features—do not use the "heat-dry" cycle. Air-dry clothes outdoors—not indoors—to avoid mold and mildew.

10. Wash Full Loads of Dishes and Clothes. Wash full loads to reduce the number of loads and decrease energy use.

11. Conserve Power. Turn off devices when you are not using them (lights, TVs, entertainment systems, computers and monitors); plug home electronics, such as TVs and DVD players, into power strips; and turn the power strips off when the equipment is not in use (older TVs and DVDs in standby mode may still use several watts of power).

12. Use CFLs and LED lighting. Replace your old inefficient incandescent lights with compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) or light-emitting diodes (LEDs). Current ENERGY STAR-labeled CFLs, for instance, use about one third of the energy and last up to 10 times longer than an incandescent bulb with the same light output.

For more energy-saving tips, visit www.energysavers.gov as provided by the U.S. Department of Energy or talk to your utility. Also, check out the Division of Energy Resources'

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["10 Ways to Save Energy"](#)
fact sheet and its website at
www.energy.mn.gov

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