

Energy Tips That Can Help You Save!



No matter what the weather is like outside, your home is usually competing with it to keep inside temperatures comfortable. Hot summers and cold winters require more energy to keep your home at the comfort level you desire.

While you can't control the elements outside, you can have an affect on your energy bills by following some of these tips on improving the energy efficiency of your home.

Tightening The Thermal Envelope

What is a thermal envelope you ask? Well, it's those things at your home or business that separate the inside from the outside, including the roof, walls, floors, windows and doors. If your home or business is suspect to air leaks and cracks in the exterior wall or from a window, it can mean that your energy dollars may be escaping as well.

Below are some helpful hints on where to start "tightening up" your home or business. Most of these energy-saving improvements can be done at a very low cost with materials that can be purchased at your local hardware or home improvement store.

- ▶ **Make sure your attic is well insulated.** This step alone can save 20% to 35% in heating costs and up to 35% in air conditioning costs.
- ▶ **Seal holes.** Be sure to seal holes with caulk or compressed fiberglass insulation.
- ▶ **Check those doors and windows.** If you see sunlight coming in around the edges, your heat and air conditioning is going out!
- ▶ **Seal all holes.** Did we mention that you need to seal all of those holes you have? Seal all leaks with caulk and remember to seal any leaks around electric switches or outlets.
- ▶ **Don't forget the walls and floors.** We can't stress it enough - insulate, insulate and then insulate some more! By insulating under floors, around water pipes, heating ducts and in crawlspaces, you can save money on your electric bill!

If you have questions about any of the above energy-saving tips, please call one of our trained and experienced Energy Services Representatives at 770-887-2363, extension 7544. Too busy to call? Just drop us a note or email and we will send you one of our "self energy audit" tapes. This "self-guided" tape walks you through what to look for to make your home more energy efficient.

How Old Is Your Air Conditioner or Heat Pump?

Is the answer 15 years or older? If so, you may want to consider replacing your current HVAC unit. There are a few items that you need to know in order to get the most product for your money. Air conditioners today use 30% - 50% less energy to produce the same amount of cooling as units made in the 1970s. Even if your AC unit is only 10 years old, you can save 20% to 40% of your cooling costs by replacing it with a newer, more efficient model. Be sure to check out the SEER ratio when looking at a new unit to purchase.



SEER = The **S**easonal **E**nergy **E**fficiency **R**atio is the amount of cooling that a heat pump (or air conditioner) delivers per every dollar spent on electricity. In other words, a higher SEER unit uses less electricity.

If you decide to replace your current HVAC unit with a minimum of a 14 SEER heat pump, then you may qualify for a rebate from Sawnee EMC. For additional information on the 2006 Energy Services Incentives and Rebates, please contact our Customer Call Center at 770-887-2363.

Lighting - Quick Ways To Save!



Increasing your lighting efficiency is one of the fastest ways to decrease your energy bills. If you replace 25% of your lights in high-use areas with fluorescents, you can save about 40% of your lighting energy bill.

Use indoor fluorescent and energy-efficient compact fluorescent light bulbs in fixtures throughout your home to provide high-quality and high-efficiency lighting. Fluorescent light bulbs are much more efficient than incandescent bulbs and last 6 to 10 times longer. Fluorescents and compact fluorescents are more expensive up front than incandescent, but pay for themselves over their lifetime.

Sawnee EMC has an added incentive (in the way of a rebate) for purchasing compact fluorescent light bulbs. If you purchase a minimum of 10 compact fluorescent light bulbs, Sawnee EMC will reimburse 1/2 of the cost up to \$20.

Why not get saving today!

Program Your Way To Energy Savings



You may have asked yourself "...is a programmable thermostat a good idea for my home?..." perhaps you have questioned "...are they really beneficial or not?..." Well, hopefully, we can help answer any lingering questions you may have.

Programmable thermostats are a great idea, no matter what the weather is outside. These devices can help to reduce your heating and cooling costs year round. Shown below are just a few of the ways programmable thermostats can save on your future energy bills:

- During winter months, significant savings can be obtained by reducing your thermostat's temperature setting for as little as 4 hours a day.
- If you set the temperature back on your thermostat for an entire night, you can save approximately 10% a year on your heating bill.
- By maintaining the highest (78 degrees in the summer) and lowest (68 in the winter) recommended temperatures for 4 or 5 hours a days, a programmable thermostat can pay for itself in energy saved within 4 years.
- If you operate a heat pump, be sure to maintain a comfortable and economical temperature setting. Frequent changes to the setting will cause the system to operate longer and diminish your savings. Also, raising the thermostat setting on a heat pump by more than 2 degrees at a time can cause the auxiliary heat to come on, therefore, increasing your energy costs.

The best thermostat for you will depend on your lifestyle and comfort level in varying house temperatures. Remember, programmable thermostats will perform consistently and dependably to keep your house at comfortable temperatures during the winter and summer months alike.

Get Ready To Caulk!

Sawnee has been emphasizing caulking as a quick and easy way to weatherize your home and, at the same time, save you money.

Although caulking is not a high-tech operation, it can be tricky. Below are some simple tips to follow when preparing to caulk your home:

1. Clean all areas to be caulked to ensure a good adhesion. Be sure to remove any old caulk and paint using a putty knife or large screwdriver.
2. Hold the caulk gun at a consistent angle - a forty-five degree angle is best for getting deep into the crack.
3. Caulk in one straight and continuous stream. Try to avoid stopping and starting.
4. Make sure the caulk sticks to both sides of a crack or seam.
5. When finished, release the trigger before pulling the gun away to avoid applying too much caulking compound. A caulking gun with an automatic release makes this process much easier!



Remember, caulk forms a flexible seal for cracks, gaps and joints less than one quarter inch wide, and is a simple way to lower your energy bill and keep your home energy

Does Your Home Have Enough Insulation?

Proper insulation plays an important role in improving the energy efficiency of your home. The higher the R-value, the greater the insulating value. The R-value measures how well a material insulates. When shopping for insulation, compare products based on their cost per R-value per inch of thickness.

Several types of materials are available for home insulation. Consider the following information when upgrading the insulation in your home:

Cellulose...is ground, recycled newsprint that's treated with a fire retardant chemical. It can be blown into ceiling spaces, and can be used for retrofitting walls that have no insulation. There are also systems for blowing dry loose fill cellulose behind a mesh support.

Fiberglass...is spun glass and is available in either batts or loose fill. They can be installed easily by the do-it-yourselfer.

Spray-in-place foams...are fairly new in the southeast. They are similar in composition to the foam that comes in the canisters for home use. They have excellent air sealing properties and high R-values, but they are only professionally installed and are more expensive.

Cotton...batts made from recycled textile scraps. Installation would be the same as for any batt material.

When you are ready to make any insulation upgrades to your home, check with Sawnee EMC to see if your improvements qualify for one of our many energy efficiency upgrade rebates. Simply call one of our Energy Services Representatives at 770-887-2363, extension 7544 or check out our Web site at www.sawnee.com.

Compliments of:

Sawnee Electric Membership Corporation
543 Atlanta Highway
Cumming, Georgia 30040
www.sawnee.com

