

Winter Energy-Saving Tips

Decrease energy bills and increase comfort by using these energy-efficiency tips

By Garrett Hylton

Heating and cooling are the most significant energy expenses for residential members. They account for nearly half of the average home energy bill.

For Klickitat PUD customers, that primarily means costs associated with staying warm in the winter.

As the yellow, orange and brown hues of fall give way to the snow and cold of winter, it's time to consider ways to control winter electricity costs.

While COVID-19 has created hardships for so many families, energy efficiency is more important than ever. Winter can be miserable enough without adding higher-than-usual electricity bills to the equation.

Thermostat Savings

The quickest and easiest way to achieve energy savings is by doing a little work with your thermostat.

The Department of Energy estimates you will save 1% on your energy bill for every degree you turn down your thermostat per eight hours. That's a lot of math to calculate, so here are some guidelines to follow.

- Generally, 68 F is a good place to start with your default temperature. If you're

willing to throw on a comfy sweater and sweatpants or cuddle up in a cozy blanket, you can crank it back a little more.

- Don't believe the myth that maintaining a constant temperature in your home is more efficient and, as a result, more cost-effective. In reality, it costs more to heat your home when you're not there to benefit. By turning the thermostat down to 60 when you're at work or asleep, you can realize savings for 16 out of 24 hours. The beauty of programmable thermostats is you can spend a few minutes setting up a program and then not worry about it for the rest of the season.
- Space heaters can be your best friend or worst enemy. When used in conjunction with your home heating system, they can help you save money. Using a single space heater to warm the area of the house where you spend the most time can allow you to turn down the temperature in the rest of your home. However, using multiple space heaters as a primary source of heat gets expensive in a hurry.

Attack Heat Loss

Controlling energy savings depends on how well your house retains heat. The less heat you need to maintain your desired temperature, the more efficiently your system will function.

- Start by locating and sealing leaks and drafts. Ensure your doors and windows seal tightly when closed and use weatherstripping accordingly. Caulk is a perfect solution for drafty frames.

Leaky ducts in your HVAC system are another leading source of heat loss.

Invest in duct sealing to lower your monthly bill.

- Another way to increase your home's heat retention is to add insulation to your attic and floor. Think of it as a winter jacket for your house. Just like thicker, better-insulated jackets keep us warmer as temperatures drop, adding insulation can help your home retain more warm air.

Other Reminders

System maintenance is important to make sure your system runs as efficiently as possible. If you have a forced-air system, make sure you regularly change the air filter.

Take advantage of the solar gain by opening your blinds and allowing the sun's rays to heat your home. When the sun goes down, energy-efficient blinds can add another layer of heat retention.

For other efficiency tips or to access KPUD's energy calculators, visit klickitatpud.com.

Calculators can help you determine how much common household items and appliances cost based on the estimated anticipated usage. The Calculators are a great way to see where costs are and how they can be reduced.

Klickitat PUD has weatherization kits available for pick-up at the Goldendale and White Salmon offices.

If you have questions, contact Anita Clever, KPUD's Energy Services Specialist, at 509-773-5891, or email at aclever@klickpud.com. ■

10 Quick Tips to Avoid High Winter Bills

Looking to lower your bills this winter?
Use the 10 tips below to conserve energy.

1



Seal air leaks and insulate well to prevent heat from escaping and cold air from entering your home.

2



Reduce waste heat by installing a programmable thermostat.

3



Turn off lights when not in use.

4



Lower your water heater temperature. The Department of Energy recommends using the warm setting (120 degrees) during fall and winter months.

5



Unplug electronics like kitchen appliances and TVs when you're away.

6



Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow sunlight in to warm your home.

7



Close blinds and curtains at night to keep cold, drafty air out.

8



Use power strips for multiple appliances, and turn off the main switch when you're away from home.

9



Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.

10



Replace incandescent lightbulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75% less energy.