

BE ENERGY SMART

On average, a U.S. family spends more than \$1,600 a year on home utility bills. There are several things you can do to save energy and money at home. To see savings, it is important to have a whole-house energy efficiency plan. Keep in mind how much certain types of energy use contribute to your bill. Here's a breakdown:

- 34% - Space heating
- 34% - Appliances and lighting
- 13% - Water heating
- 11% - Electric A/C
- 8% - Refrigerator

Consider these steps you can take to lower your energy use and utility bills.

THE HOUSE

- Insulating properly and sealing air leaks can save up to 10% on your heating and cooling bill. Check the insulation levels in your attic, exterior and basement walls, ceilings, floors, and crawl spaces. Determine whether the R-value of your insulation meets the recommendation for your area.
- Check around walls, ceilings, windows, doors, light and plumbing fixtures, switches, and electrical outlets for holes or cracks that may leak air.
- Keep fireplace dampers closed.
- Only heat or cool rooms you need - close vents and doors of unused rooms.

APPLIANCES

- Turn off lights and appliances when not in use.

- Properly maintain appliances and heating and cooling systems. This includes cleaning or replacing filters as needed.
- Use a programmable thermostat for heating and air-conditioning. This will keep the equipment from operating as much at night or when you are not home.
- Set the thermostat at a lower temperature in the winter and higher in the summer. This may not be possible if infants, ill, or elderly persons are in the house.
- Set the hot water heater's thermostat to 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Only wash full loads of dishes and clothes.
- Let dishes air dry instead of using the dishwasher's drying cycle.

AROUND THE HOUSE

- Turn off the computer and monitor when not in use.
- Plug home electronics, such as TVs, into power strips. Turn the power strips off when the equipment isn't being used.
- Take short showers instead of baths.
- Turn off kitchen, bath, and other exhaust fans within 20 minutes after you are done cooking or bathing.
- When the weather is warm, keep window coverings closed on south, east, and west windows. When it is cold, let the sunlight in.
- If possible, use fans to keep cool.

ENERGY SAVERS

There are several ways to save energy and money that may not cost very much.



- Seal and weatherstrip doors and windows to keep air from leaking in or out.
- Seal exposed ductwork joints in the attic, crawlspace, or basement. Insulate ducts as well.
- Install a water tank insulation wrap to keep heat inside the tank.
- Reduce hot water use by installing low-flow showerheads and sink aerators.
- Replace single-pane windows with energy-efficient windows. Or, install plastic sheeting on the inside of windows.
- Replace light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs - they use less energy and generate less heat. Start by replacing the five most used light bulbs in your home.
- When buying new products, such as household appliances, look for those that are energy-efficient. The lower lifetime energy cost makes them a smarter buy.

You may be able to get a one-time income tax credit when you install energy-efficient improvements in your home. This includes installation of efficient windows, insulation, doors, roofs, and heating and cooling equipment. Consult your tax advisor.



MORE INFORMATION

To find more information on saving energy, visit the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy website at www.eere.energy.gov. Also, visit the ORS website at www.regulatorystaff.sc.gov. A search for *energy saving tips* will provide you with links to explore this topic.



Contact your utility company for additional information on energy conservation. The company may be able to help you evaluate your energy use.

Duke Energy 1-800-777-9898
www.duke-energy.com

Lockhart Power 1-800-368-1289
www.lockhartpower.com

Piedmont Natural Gas 1-800-752-7504
www.piedmontng.com

Progress Energy 1-800-452-2777
www.progress-energy.com

SCE&G 1-800-251-7234
www.scana.com/SCEG

For more information on lowering energy costs during the winter and summer, see these ORS brochures:

- Winter Heating Costs: A Consumer Advisory
- Summer Cooling Costs: A Consumer Advisory

References:

U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. *Energy Savers: Tips on Saving Energy and Money at Home*. January 2006

QUESTIONS? ORS CAN HELP

The Consumer Services Division of the Office of Regulatory Staff can assist with utility bills by arranging payment plans with your electric or gas utility and by directing you to social service agencies that may have available funds to assist with energy costs.

Phone: 803-737-5230 (Columbia, S.C.)
1-800-922-1531 (toll-free in S.C.)

803-737-5175 TTY (Columbia, S.C.)
1-800-334-2217 TTY (toll-free in S.C.)

Fax: 803-737-4750

Web: www.regulatorystaff.sc.gov

Hours: 8:30 a.m.—5:00 p.m.
Monday through Friday
(closed state holidays)

ABOUT ORS

The S.C. Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) was created in 2004 by the S.C. General Assembly.

The ORS represents the public interest of South Carolina in utility regulation with regard to rates, charges, service standards, facilities, and practices of the major utility industries - electric, natural gas, telecommunications, water/wastewater, and transportation - before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (PSC), the court system, the S.C. General Assembly, and federal regulatory bodies. The ORS has responsibility for oversight of railroad safety and natural gas pipeline safety in the state.

In fulfilling this mission, the ORS strives to balance the concerns of the using and consuming public, the financial integrity of public utilities, and the economic development of South Carolina.

SAVING ENERGY

A CONSUMER ADVISORY



INFORMATION FOR CONSUMERS