

POWER PAGES

THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF TEXAS



OPTIMIZE YOUR ELECTRIC SERVICE AND SAVE ON YOUR MONTHLY BILL

Energy conservation not only means protecting and improving the environment — it also results in savings on your electric bill. This fact sheet provides you with simple solutions for conserving energy and lowering your monthly electric costs. It also gives information on offers your retail electric company may provide in order to better suit your needs as a customer.

SAVING STRATEGIES

Lighting

Helpful Habits

- Always turn lights off in rooms you are not using.
- Make sure bulbs do not exceed the recommended wattage indicated on the light socket.
- One larger wattage bulb is more efficient than two smaller wattage bulbs.
- Directed light, such as for reading, is more efficient than brightly lighting an entire room.
- Clean light bulbs regularly.

Water Heater

Maintaining & Updating Your System

- Set temperature to 120°F if your dishwasher has its own water heater, otherwise set it at 140°F.
- Repair leaking faucets. Warm-water leaks should be given immediate attention because they can raise your electric consumption rapidly.
- Drain your hot water tank regularly to remove sediment.
- Consider a tankless water heater: they are 35-45% more efficient, pay for themselves in 3-5 years, and you will never run out of hot water.

Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC)

Helpful Habits

- Set your thermostat to 78°F in the summer and 68°F in the winter—every degree of extra heating or cooling will increase energy usage 6 to 8%.
- Setting your thermostat to a lower temperature than normal will not cool your home faster.
- On warm days raise your thermostat to 80°F or higher if leaving for more than four hours.
- Use shades or curtains to block the sun and heat during warm weather and open them to let the sun warm your home during cooler months.
- In warm weather, try to save heat and humidity generating activities (cooking, laundering, and dishwashing) for early morning or evening.

Maintaining & Updating Your System

- Ensure that your HVAC system is properly sized for your home.
- At the beginning of cooler or warmer weather have a professional come out to inspect your HVAC system.
- Have your duct system checked for air leaks and proper insulation.
- Consider installing a “whole house fan” to improve circulation and ventilation throughout your home.

ENERGY CHECK

Landscaping

A properly landscaped home can significantly reduce your household energy consumption for heating and cooling and pay for itself in less than eight years.

Consult your local nursery for information on trees and shrubbery that can serve as shade in the summer and wind blocks in the winter. You should consider mature size, growth rate, strength, and brittleness before planting.

Insulation & Weatherization

Increase the comfort of your home while reducing your bills up to 30% by investing in proper insulation and weatherization products. Reduce air leaks and increase the efficiency of your home by caulking, sealing, and weather stripping all seams, cracks, and openings to the outside. Check with the [Insulation Contractors Association of America](#) to make sure your home meets current insulation recommendations.



Texas Electric Choice
EDUCATION PROGRAM

PowerToChoose.org

1-866-797-4839

Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning

Continued...

- Outside air conditioning units, or condensers, should be shaded.
- Check your air filters once a month; clean or replace them if necessary.
- Programmable thermostats can save a household about \$100 per year.

Additional Information

- Don't leave bathroom or kitchen ventilation fans running longer than necessary; they replace inside air with outside air.
- Do not use humidifiers or evaporator ("swamp") coolers with the air conditioner.

Other Appliances

Helpful Habits

- Use the air-dry option on your dishwasher if available or open the door after the final rinse cycle to dry the dishes.

- Run your dishwasher with a full load.
- Keep your refrigerator and freezer full; they will stay cooler.
- When drying clothes, do not overfill the dryer and use the automatic setting if available. Dry loads back-to-back if possible, but remember to clean the lint screen between each load.

Maintaining & Updating Your Appliances

- Ensure that the outside clothes dryer air vent is well-sealed.
- Keep condenser coils on the back of your refrigerator and freezer clean.
- When considering purchasing new appliances consult [Energy Star](#) for information on which models they have approved to use less energy, save money, and help protect the environment.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Retail Electric Providers

- Check your Retail Electric Provider's website or call their customer service number for additional information on energy conservation and saving on your electric bill. Visit the [Power to Choose](#) Web site to learn more about [Retail Electric Providers](#) and your options.

Texas Energy Efficiency

- The investor-owned utilities of Texas are required to meet energy efficiency levels. Service providers receive incentives from the utilities which lead to savings on energy efficiency improvements for their customers. [Texas Energy Efficiency](#) provides links to information about these programs.

Energy Star

- This program requires that a product meet strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the [US Environmental Protection Agency](#) and the [US Department of Energy](#). Visit the [Energy Star](#) Web site for information regarding utility savings associated with Energy Star appliances and complete the [Home Energy Analysis](#) for individualized information concerning your household energy consumption.

Other Helpful Links

- [Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy: Tips on Saving Energy and Money at Home](#)

- [Federal Trade Commission: Cooling Your Home & Keeping Costs Low](#)
- [EPA's Home Energy Saver: Online Energy Audit Tool](#)

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR ELECTRIC BILL

Shop Around

Customers in competitive markets can compare electric providers based on lower rates, renewable power options, or better customer service. You can easily see what your options are by visiting www.PowerToChoose.org to see the list of service providers for your area. With the ability to compare you may find that you can save on your monthly bill by switching electric providers.

Pay an Average Amount

All Retail Electric Providers offer average payment plans that allow customers the option to pay an average amount each month. Your electric provider may not mention this option, so make sure to specifically ask about it if you are interested. Some companies call it budget or balanced billing. Customers with limited account history or poor payment history may be denied this option.

Choose Your Billing Date

Some retail electric providers allow you the opportunity to choose your billing date. Contact your provider if you wish to find out more about this option.

