

# Energy Tips

*Save energy and help lower your electric bill.*

*Here are some tips from Laurens Electric Cooperative to help you save energy for heating, cooling, lighting and cooking at your home.*

You and your neighbor can live in homes that are exactly alike, yet depending on how you use energy in your home, one of you could be spending twice as much as the other each month.

In the average American home, space heating makes up about 49% of energy use, appliances and lighting about 28%, and water heating about 16%. This is according to research by the Edison Electric Institute.

**If you're a homeowner or a renter,** we hope some of these tips will increase your comfort and enjoyment of your home, as well as help save energy and the environment!

## KEEPING COOL



- **Insulate your home** as much as you can. That makes a big difference, whether for heating or cooling.
- **Set your air-conditioning thermostat at the highest temperature setting at which you're comfortable.** Cooling costs can be reduced by about five percent for every two degrees higher you set your unit. Keep heat-producing items like televisions and lamps away from thermostats.
- **Light bulbs produce heat.** Keep them off during the day as much as you can. Drapes, blinds and shades should be closed during the hottest hours.
- **Humidity is a factor.** Take baths and wash dishes early in the morning or in the evening instead of during the day. Use an outside clothesline to avoid adding heat to your house during the hottest months.
- **If you have a powered roof ventilator, turn it off.** Experts have learned there are more negative effects than positive benefits of their use. In the warm months, it draws cooled air from inside your home into the hot attic and can cause humidity to be drawn into the home.
- **Use an air-conditioner with an efficiency rating of 13 or higher.** Window units are rated by their Energy Efficiency Ratio (EER), while central systems use a Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER). Use the proper size because bigger is not always better.
- **Maintain cooling systems properly.** Clean or replace filters regularly. Window units generally have filters behind the front panel, and they need to be cleaned with soap and water. Use a brush to clean the coils on outside heat exchangers.



**Laurens Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

**LEC** Laurens Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

P.O. Box 700

225 1/4 Highway 14

Laurens, South Carolina 29360



Printed on recycled paper

9-08-2M-1043

## STAYING WARM

- **Insulate, using materials with a high efficiency rating number.**



- **Install storm windows and doors** or less-expensive vinyl window kits. Remove or cover window air conditioning units for the winter.

- **Drafts can occur** wherever two different building materials or parts of a building meet. Use

weather-stripping or caulk to block cold air, especially around windows, doors and attic access doors. Insulate the back side of the attic door.

- **Washing, cooking and bathing all add heat** and humidity to the air on colder days. Open the blinds and shades to let the sun in.

- **Showers use less hot water,** on average, than baths.

- **Set the thermostat at the lowest setting at which you are comfortable.** Each degree above 68 degrees adds about five percent to your heating bill. Don't set the thermostat higher at first, thinking it will heat your home faster. It won't!



- **Make sure the thermostat is not affected by a cold draft.**
- **Lower the thermostat if you're going to be away for more than eight hours.**
- **In rooms with high ceilings, reverse the circulation direction of ceiling fans** in order to push down warmer air.
- **Keep the fireplace damper closed** when it's not used. Glass fireplace doors also greatly reduce heat loss.
- **Keep furnaces and heat pumps in good condition.** Change filters regularly.

## IN THE KITCHEN AND LAUNDRY ROOM

- **Microwave ovens use less than half the power** of a conventional oven. So do electric skillets and toaster ovens.



- **Don't preheat the oven unless it's necessary.** Many foods don't require it. And no peeking! Each time you open the door, you lower the temperature by 25 to 50 degrees.

- **Use cold water in the garbage disposal.** It's better for the unit and uses less energy.

- **A dishwasher is more energy efficient than washing by hand.** Open the door and let the load air dry to save electricity. Wash only full loads!

- **For the refrigerator and freezer, the most efficient settings are 40 degrees and 0 degrees Fahrenheit,** respectively. A full refrigerator or freezer uses less energy.

- **Refrigerator and freezer doors need to be airtight.** Replace the gaskets if they are cracking or drying out.



- **It's more energy efficient to let food cool slightly** before putting it in the refrigerator. Don't put uncovered liquids in the refrigerator because it will work harder to remove the moisture.

- **Keep your dryer lint filter clean** and have the exhaust duct cleaned annually. This saves energy and reduces fire hazard.

- **Wash clothes with cool water when possible** and always rinse in cold water. If you can't set your washing machine for the size of load, wait until you have a full load.

- **The soak cycle saves energy.** Don't over-wash; ten minutes is usually enough for even the dirtiest of clothes.

## OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

- **Sodium vapor lights are a good option for outdoor use.** They consume less energy for the same light output as incandescent bulbs and they last longer.

- **Landscaping also can make a difference.**

A line of fast-growing trees, like poplars, or tall shrubs can serve as a windbreak. Planting evergreen trees on the north side and deciduous trees on the south side of a home can block winter winds and summer sun. Shrubs along the house can help, too, but don't let them interfere with heat pumps or air conditioners.



- **Make sure shrubs and weeds don't interfere with outside heat pump or furnace units,** which should be hosed down periodically to remove leaves, grass clippings, dust and dirt. Be aware that fire ants can damage outside heat pumps and air-conditioning units.

### NO COST, LOW-COST BRIGHT IDEAS TO SAVE ENERGY

- **It does not save money to close registers in unused rooms** with central heating and ductwork. Your system was designed to work its best when warm air flows unimpeded throughout the house. (And cool air, too, if you have a heat pump.) Also, make sure furniture, appliances or drapes do not block return registers.



- **Place lamps in corners** to reflect light from two walls instead of one. Light-colored walls reflect more light than dark walls, so less light is needed. Use task lighting, focused where you need it rather than lighting an entire room.

- **Fluorescent bulbs far outlast incandescent bulbs** and can be found to fit most standard fixtures. If you use them in places where you use bulbs that operate four or more hours a day, your investment in the more expensive fluorescent bulbs will more than pay for itself in a couple of years.

- **Compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) are four times more energy efficient than incandescent bulbs** and last up to 10 times longer.

- **Turn off incandescent bulbs when you leave a room,** they produce heat and burn out faster. But leave on fluorescent bulbs if you're going to be gone 15 minutes or less. It takes more energy to turn them on than it does to just let them run, and it wears out the bulb faster.

- **Keep your oven top, pots and pans spic and span.** Shiny reflector pans under your stove burners help focus the heat more efficiently. Tight-fitting lids produce results faster by not letting heat escape, allowing you to use less heat and less water. You can turn the heat off earlier, since it's retained longer.

- **Computer equipment** is the fastest-growing category of electricity use in the home. Consider turning off computer and home entertainment equipment if you're not going to be using it for a while.



- **Set water heaters at 120-140 degrees.** Insulate pipes when possible. In large homes, consider using smaller heaters in different areas.

*For more information or energy savings tips, call  
Laurens Electric Cooperative.*

682-3141 or 800-942-3141

[www.laureselectric.com](http://www.laureselectric.com)

*The Touchstone Energy® symbol is your assurance that we're a community-minded electric cooperative providing high standards of service for customers large and small.*