



HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY ENERGY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Ways to cut home energy costs – right now!

Are there any ways to beat the system? You bet there are! The first step is to take a look at where energy goes in a normal American home. The figures are well established. Some 70% goes to cooling and/or heating the house; 20% heats water; 10% runs lighting and appliances.

With that for starters, here are some practical things you can do right now to slash the local utility company's bite, and soaring home fuel bills, by up to half or more. Many items cost nothing at all; others involve minor expense for simple projects, most of which you can build or install yourself; a few require sensible investment that will pay for itself over a few years of use. All have been tested and proven for the Federal Energy Administration (FEA) or the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA), by scientific laboratories in universities or in industrial labs.

Things to do without building or installing anything.

- ✓ Keep daytime thermostats at 78 °F in summer and 68 °F in winter. Both limits fall within a good health range. "People who insist they're pneumonia bait at anything below 75 °F in winter," say ERDA scientists, "are the same ones who cry "heat prostration" in summer if the air conditioner is set above 65 °F." You'll save 3 percent of fuel costs for every degree the average house temperature is cut.
- ✓ Reduce your thermostat to 55 °F when you retire at night during the heating season and raise it to 80 °F in the cooling season. The fuel bill can realize a 1 percent reduction for every degree of change.
- ✓ Protect your thermostats from direct sunlight and drafts.
- ✓ Check ductwork for leaks. Tape any loose seams or joints.
- ✓ Turn "off" ventilating fans in kitchen or bath when they've done their job.

Air Conditioning

- ✓ Set the thermostat at 78 °F, which can be comfortable if you dress lightly. If your usual setting was 72 °F you'll save between 12 and 14 percent (depending on your location) of the annual bill for cooling.
- ✓ Don't set the thermostat colder "to get it started" on the theory that it will cool the room sooner. It won't!
- ✓ Change or clean your air conditioner's filter monthly during the cooling season. Dirt slows movement of cool air into the house.
- ✓ Keep the air conditioner's fan on "high" except in humid weather. The compressor works just as hard whether the fan is set on high or low. On high, more cooled air is brought into the house and the compressor will shut itself off sooner.
- ✓ Spread cooled air around a room with a small portable fan or ceiling fans. It keeps the cooled air from "layering" and settling to the floor.
- ✓ Turn "off" a room air conditioner when you leave the room. You'll use less current bringing the temperature down again when you return than if you left it running.
- ✓ Don't locate lamps, TV or radio near enough to affect the air conditioner's thermostatic control, which is highly sensitive.
- ✓ Keep direct sunlight from entering an air conditioned room. This is readily achieved by drawing drapes and closing blinds or shades. Such simple measures can reduce the sun's heat input into a room by up to 80 percent.
- ✓ Keep windows and outside doors closed when the temperature outside is higher than inside.
- ✓ If you use storm windows in winter, leave them up in summer. The double glass has an insulating effect that can cut heat infiltration by more than half.
- ✓ Keep lights "off" whenever possible while the air conditioner is running, and use lamps with as low wattage as possible when you need light. Incandescent lamps add considerable heat for the air conditioner to get rid of.
- ✓ Do all cooking and baking if possible in early morning and late evening during hot weather.