

## Reduce Your Energy Bills

Contact your electric utility & find out if you qualify for a home energy assessment. That's the quickest way to find steps to save energy & money around the home. The following tips can help, too.

### 1. Throughout the Home

- Unplug cell phone chargers, electronics, & small appliances when you're not using them. Advanced power strips can help greatly.
- An electricity usage monitor will show how much energy a device or appliance is using, including standby power.
- Set your water heater at 120 degrees. Insulate hot water pipes if you need to.
- On really hot days (90 degrees or more), wait until after dark to do laundry or use the stove or oven. Cook with your microwave.
- Look for the Energy Star label and do your homework when shopping for new windows.
- Keep energy efficiency in mind with any landscaping. Plant deciduous trees to the west & south of the home, & evergreens to the north.

### 2. Insulation is Critical

- Make sure your attic, exterior walls, & any crawl spaces are properly insulated. Your attic insulation should be rated at R-38 or higher in southern Indiana, & R-49 or higher in northern Indiana.
- You may need to add attic insulation if you haven't in a few years. It can settle over time, becoming less effective.
- Check weather stripping, caulking, & seals around doors/windows. Several small holes or cracks can let as much air out as an open window.
- Use plastic or foam gaskets to insulate drafty electrical outlets.
- Close the fireplace damper when not using it.

### 3. Maintain Your Heating & Cooling System

- Change your filter regularly. A dirty filter makes the unit work harder than it should, using more energy & costing you more money.
- Follow the manufacturer's recommendations & have the unit serviced regularly by a professional.
- If your furnace has a built in humidifier, use it during the winter to help make the air feel warmer.
- Check ductwork regularly to ensure there are no leaks. Clean the vents regularly & keep them unblocked.
- Adjust the thermostat to use less energy when going to bed at night or leaving home for more than 5 hours. A programmable or "smart" thermostat can do this automatically.

### 4. Lights & Fans

- Don't wait for old lightbulbs to burn out. Change them out now to start saving money. Light emitting diodes (LEDs) use much less power than traditional incandescent bulbs & last much longer.
- Look at lumens - rather than watts - when selecting bulbs. Lumens measure a bulb's brightness.
- Turn the lights off when leaving a room. Use a timer for lights when you're on vacation.
- Set ceiling fans to turn clockwise in winter & counterclockwise in summer. Turn them off when leaving the room.
- Use exhaust fans as little as possible. They can quickly pull large amounts of heated or cooled air out of your home.

### 5. Appliances

- Clean or vacuum your refrigerator's coils at least twice a year.
- Close your refrigerator door on a dollar bill. If the bill slips out easily, it's time to replace the gaskets.
- Reconsider that extra refrigerator or freezer in the garage. It's likely to use more power than it should.
- Wash only full loads of clothes, but don't overload the washer. Wash with cold water and use energy-saving settings.
- Make sure your clothes dryer's venting system is unclogged & working properly. Air dry clothing & dishes when possible.
- Buying a new appliance? Look for Energy Star products & read the EnergyGuide labels. Be aware of any rebates your utilities may offer.

For more information on utility issues, subscribe to our monthly newsletter at [IN.gov/OUCC/2877htm](http://IN.gov/OUCC/2877htm)



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