

## **Manage your summer electric costs with these simple tips**

Higher temperatures and higher electric bills go hand-in-hand. While you can't control the weather, there are steps you can take to better manage your electricity use and its costs.

"The forecast for the rest of the week – calling for temperatures in the nineties throughout Indiana – is a call for everyone to use electricity more carefully," said Indiana Utility Consumer Counselor David Stippler. "There are many low-cost and no-cost steps that can help add up to savings for the consumer, while also helping to ease the electric grid's workload at its busiest time."

To help keep your energy expenses in check, the Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) recommends that you:

- Cook with a microwave during the day. On 90-plus degree days, it's best to wait until evening to use the oven, wash dishes, do laundry, or use other large appliances.
- Give exhaust fans a break because they can quickly pull cool air out of the building. If you must use one, keep it on for the shortest time possible.
- Use ceiling fans when you're in the room but turn them off when you leave. Ceiling fans should turn counter-clockwise during the summer.
- Keep the thermostat at the warmest comfortable temperature, and raise it a few degrees if no one will be home for more than 5 hours.
- Check your air conditioner's filter and either change or clean it if necessary. A dirty filter will make the unit waste energy by working harder. Don't let rugs or furniture cover the vents, and schedule regular maintenance for your HVAC system.
- Move TVs and appliances, especially older ones, away from the thermostat because of the heat they give off. And move lamps away from the thermostat if you're using traditional incandescent bulbs.
- If you're not using a charger for a cell phone or other device, unplug it. Don't underestimate how much "phantom power" is leaked from a device that's plugged in but not being used. Power strips can help.
- Turn off all lights, computers, TVs, and other appliances if you are not using them. Use timers for these items in your home when going on vacation.
- Keep blinds, shades, draperies, windows, and storm doors closed, especially in the afternoon.

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- Look around the attic if you haven't in the last few years. Insulation can settle over time, becoming less effective.
- Check the temperature on your water heater. For most households, it doesn't need to be higher than 120 degrees.
- Clean or vacuum the coils on your refrigerator.
- Close your refrigerator and freezer doors on a dollar bill, and then try to pull the bill out. If it slides out, then your gaskets are loose and are letting cold air seep away.
- If you have a second refrigerator or freezer in the garage or basement, think about getting rid of it. Many electric utilities will haul old refrigerators and freezers away at no charge if they are still working, and will pay you for them.
- Look for the EnergyStar and WaterSense labels if you're shopping for new appliances. Energy and water efficiency standards have improved dramatically in recent years.

You can save more money and energy by taking part in your electric utility's energy efficiency programs, including home energy assessments, online tools for finding ways to save, or both.

More tips are available at [www.IN.gov/OUCC](http://www.IN.gov/OUCC), at [www.energy.gov/energysaver](http://www.energy.gov/energysaver), and from your electric utility. Consumers without Internet access can call the OUCC toll-free at 1-888-441-2494 to request copies of the agency's tips.

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The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) represents Indiana consumer interests before state and federal bodies that regulate utilities. As a state agency, the OUCC's mission is to represent all Indiana consumers to ensure quality, reliable utility services at the most reasonable prices possible through dedicated advocacy, consumer education, and creative problem solving.

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