

HOT WEATHER DRIVES ENERGY USAGE!



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WAYS TO SAVE: Top 10 List of Summer Conservation Tips

1. THERMOSTAT SETTINGS

Thermostat settings are important when it comes to energy consumption and energy conservation. United recommends a thermostat setting of 78 degrees Fahrenheit or higher in the summer. **For a residence, every degree below 78 in the summer will cause an approximate 5 percent increase in monthly kWh usage.**

2. HVAC MAINTENANCE

Cooling systems use over half of the energy consumed in homes. United encourages its members to continue to incorporate a regular maintenance program for the HVAC system(s) located at their homes. This maintenance includes regular filter changes and tune-ups, which will ensure that the system(s) are operating at peak performance.

3. SEAL AIR LEAKS

Every hole in a home's energy envelope contributes to air infiltration and loss, which contributes to increased energy usage. Make sure there is weather-stripping and caulking around exterior doors and windows. Plumbing and wiring penetrations in and out of the home should be sealed with spray foam where accessible. Install electrical outlet and switch gaskets on inside perimeter walls to stop excessive air infiltration.

4. CLOSE FIREPLACE FLUES

While built-in fireplaces can be aesthetically pleasing on a cold, wet, winter day, they also can serve as a major void in your home's energy envelope. In fact, the cold air emitted from your air conditioning system escapes out of your chimney almost as effectively as the heat and smoke from your fireplace does, and keeping the damper open is equivalent to keeping a 48-inch window wide open during the summer.

5. ATTIC INSULATION

One of the easiest ways to decrease the runtime of your HVAC equipment is to ensure that your home's attic is equipped with an adequate level of insulation. United's team of energy innovation experts recommends an insulation R-value of 38 in the attic. This is equivalent to 17 inches of blown fiberglass, 10 inches of blown cellulose, (2) 6-inch fiberglass batts or approximately 5.5 inches of spray foam.

6. ELECTRIC FANS

Fans are an inexpensive way to make a room feel cooler, and allow homeowners to raise the temperature a degree or two on the thermostat without feeling much difference. **Always remember that fans cool people, not homes. So, for the best energy savings, be sure to use fans only in areas of the home where people are.**

7. SEAL HVAC DUCTWORK

Leaks in the duct work can increase costs by up to 30 percent and reduce comfort. Mastic, or tape designed specifically for HVAC equipment, should be applied to all duct connections to ensure that the conditioned air within the ducting is not escaping to unconditioned areas—such as attic cavities or crawl spaces.

8. SOLAR HEAT GAIN

Don't allow sunlight into rooms from south-facing windows, as this naturally heats areas of any home. Close blinds and drapes to assist in retaining cool air. Most conventional drapes can reduce heat gain into the home by as much as 10 percent. For maximum effectiveness, drapes should be hung as close to the window as possible, and should fall onto the window sill or floor. **United also recommends solar screens to keep rooms cool. These can block up to 90 percent of heat before hitting the first pane of glass.**

9. POOL EQUIPMENT AND OPERATION

While pools can provide a great escape from the summer heat, the electric pool pump can use a lot of energy while in operation. United recommends operating pool pumps one hour for every 10 degrees of outside air temperature as a good rule of thumb. **When it's time to replace a pool pump, United recommends upgrading to a variable-speed motor to save energy. Also, make sure to clean pool filters regularly so they run more efficiently.**

10. FREE ENERGY AUDIT

United is committed to educating the membership so that it's equipped to make informed decisions about energy use. **To obtain additional help in identifying ways to waste less energy and save money, members should request a FREE HOME ENERGY AUDIT today!**



UNITED IS ALWAYS HERE TO HELP! Financial assistance has been allocated through United's Operation Round Up Program to provide direct or third-party assistance to members in situations where help is not available through other channels. Members can contact any United office to learn more.