

# Energy Saving Tips

## Wilson Energy

### Heating and Cooling

More than 50 percent of annual energy costs come from your home's heating and cooling systems. Check the filters in your air conditioning and heating systems monthly and change them as needed. Vacuum dust and lint from all air intakes and outlets. Clean filters allow air to move more freely and systems to work more efficiently.

### Heating Recommendations

- With a heat pump, avoid large changes in thermostat settings. A dramatic increase in temperature may cause the supplemental heat strip to operate, forcing energy consumption much higher along with your costs.
- Change your filter regularly. Dirty filters increase heating and cooling costs.
- Caulk and weather-strip leaky doors and windows. Insulated or storm windows also help reduce unwanted heat loss.
- Open drapes on the sunny side (usually south and west) of your house during the day. You'd be surprised how efficiently that sunlight will warm those rooms. Close drapes and shades at night.
- Make sure drapes and furniture are not blocking air vents or returns.
- A portable heater may allow you to lower the temperature in the rest of the house, but it can also be expensive if used 24 hours. Use portable heaters in moderation.
- Turn off kitchen or bathroom exhaust fans when your air conditioning is operating.
- Keep your central unit fan in the "auto" position. Running the fan 24 hours a day can add as much as \$15 a month to your heating costs.
- Keep the outside heating unit clear and clean.
- Close the flue when you aren't using your fireplace.

### Cooling Recommendations

- Keep your thermostat set at 78-80 degrees Fahrenheit. For every degree above 78, you'll save 6 percent to 8 percent on your cooling costs.
- When you leave home, set the thermostat a few degrees higher.
- Change dirty filters. They should be checked monthly. Inexpensive filters should be changed monthly. Be sure the outside unit and indoor return are free of debris. You may want to hose off your outside unit a couple of times a year.
- Make sure your home is properly insulated. We recommend the following types in our area: ceiling insulation R-30, walls R-11 to R-15, and floors R-19.

- Use a ceiling fan or portable fan along with your air conditioning. A fan can make you feel four degrees cooler and costs only a penny or so per hour to operate. It won't cool an empty room, though, so turn it off when you leave.
- Use shades or curtains to block direct sunlight on the sunny side (usually south and west) of your home.
- Whenever practical, use your microwave or countertop appliances for cooking. They usually cost less to operate and they don't heat the room the way a large oven does.
- Have a professional check your central unit once a year. A unit working improperly can force your bills higher, especially older units.
- For central air conditioning systems, set your thermostat fan switch to "auto". Running the central AC fan 24 hours a day can add up to \$15 to your bill and doesn't cool any more effectively.

### Recommendations for Your Home

- Set your water heater to 120 degrees. Most manufacturers set the temperature at 140 degrees, but many families operate comfortably at 120 degrees. Not only does this save money, it also reduces the risk of hot water scalding. To save additional energy, install a low-flow shower head and limit showers to five minutes.
- Replace conventional light bulbs with Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs). CFLs use a fraction of the energy that traditional bulbs use and can be found in many stores.
- Purchase energy efficient products when replacing appliances and heating and cooling systems. Look for Energy Star<sup>®</sup> products.

### Good Landscaping Saves You Money All Year

- Carefully-positioned trees can save up to 25% of a household's heating and cooling costs. The U.S. Department of Energy says that only three trees planted strategically can save an average household \$100 to \$250 in energy costs per year.
- Deciduous trees should be planted on the south and western sides of the house to shade during the summer while allowing light in during the winter.
- Evergreen trees and shrubs on the north and northwest sides can provide a windbreak.
- Also, shading your AC unit can make it run up to 10% more efficiently.

### Find More Savings

Homes can have hidden problems that cause bills to skyrocket in the summer or winter, such as missing insulation. A home energy audit may help you locate and solve these mysteries. Energy Depot is an online, do-it-yourself tool that helps customers use energy wisely. You can consider it your energy information "tool box." Here are the tools you'll find in Energy Depot:

- Personal Energy Profile which can be used to obtain the most comprehensive look at your home energy use and how you can save energy and money. You can choose either the detailed Full Audit or the abbreviated EZ Audit.
- Energy Calculator can be used to quickly estimate the annual energy use and costs for individual electric or natural gas home systems and appliances.
- Energy Comparison Tool can be used when considering replacing your home heating/cooling system or water heater. This tool allows you to compare your existing system with a range of new systems.
- Energy Library is a collection of fact sheets to read more about home energy topics and ways to use energy more wisely.

Wilson Energy customers may also request a visit to their homes by one of our trained professionals for a free energy audit. They may be able to offer advice about boosting your energy efficiency. To schedule an energy audit, send an email to [awoodard@wilsonnc.org](mailto:awoodard@wilsonnc.org) or call us at 252-399-2413. Appointments (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays) are usually set up within a few days. We'll need your address and your daytime phone number, and, of course, we need you to be home at the time. A home energy audit could save you money, and we offer it free of charge.

#### Home Energy Audits

Physical problems in the home like drafty window, inadequate or missing insulation, or fallen ductwork can cause power bills to go up.

If you have a problem with your bill, contact Customer Service at 252-399-2200, but if you think the problem is in your home, we have two options available to help you.

#### Online Energy Depot "Do It Yourself" Home Audit

Energy Depot is an online tool that helps customers use energy wisely. You can consider it your energy information "tool box." Here are the tools you'll find in Energy Depot:

- Personal Energy Profile which can be used to obtain the most comprehensive look at your home energy use and how you can save energy and money. You can choose either the detailed Full Audit or the abbreviated EZ Audit.
- Energy Calculator can be used to quickly estimate the annual energy use and costs for individual electric or natural gas home systems and appliances.
- Energy Comparison Tool can be used when considering replacing your home heating/cooling system or water heater. This tool allows you to compare your existing system with a range of new systems.
- Energy Library is a collection of fact sheets to read more about home energy topics and ways to use energy more wisely.

Your second option is to request a visit to your home by one of our trained professionals to conduct a free energy audit. They know where to look and may be able to offer advice about boosting your energy efficiency.

To schedule an energy audit, call us at 252-399-2413. Appointments (8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) are usually set up within a few days. We'll need your address and your daytime phone number, and, of course, we need you to be home at the time.