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Air-Conditioning Tips

from the U.S. Department of Energy

Here are some simple energy-saving tips from the U.S. Department of Energy that can help you cut cooling costs when the mercury skyrockets this summer. Clip and save near your thermostat or air-conditioner.

- Avoid locating your air conditioner in direct sunlight-particularly on the south side of your home-where it will be forced to work much harder to do its job.
- Adjust thermostat properly. Another method of increasing efficiency includes installing thermostats which automatically raise and lower home temperature for prescribed periods to save energy. This also can be done with conventional thermostats.
- However, when you want to achieve rapid temperature change for comfort, don't set the thermostat higher or lower than the desired temperature. That doesn't cool or heat a home any faster-it just makes the system work longer.
- Turn off window air conditioners when you leave a room for several hours. It takes less energy to cool the room down later than if you had left the unit running.
- When the "A/C" is on, shut off kitchen, bath and other ventilating fans as soon as they've done their job. In just one hour, these fans can blow away a houseful of costly, cooled air.
- Keep doors and windows shut. Whenever a cooling or heating system is working, doors and windows should be shut-the system can't be helped by making it easier for outside air to flow into the house. When the freshness of outside air is wanted, turn off the air conditioning or heating unit first.
- Help your air conditioner "breathe easier." Clean or replace the filter at least once a month this summer. A filter clogged with dust, pollen or soot "smothers" the air conditioner and wastes energy and your money. Let your monthly electric bill be your regular reminder to clean or change the filter.
- Let contractors help. Air conditioning contractors also will check filters as part of preventive maintenance that is well worth its cost. This includes checking working parts, such as belts and electrical contracts; making sure the thermostat is working properly; and replacing or adding refrigerant if needed.
- Manufacturers of residential air conditioning and heating systems want consumers to know everything they can about achieving maximum comfort and efficiency while saving energy and money, too. If you have questions about your present system or how to improve it, call in an expert--a qualified and licensed air conditioning contractor.

Saving energy saves dollars and makes sense.