

Spring / Summer Energy Tips For Your Home - Apartment

Attic Fans: If your house has an attic fan in the hallway, make sure you uncover the opening grates. Test the fan and make sure the unit is operating properly. Grates should open freely when turned on low setting. Flip the switch to High setting and make sure unit is running properly. If belt is noisy, check the tension - this can be done by removing the opening grate assembly to access motor / exhaust fan units. These units work well in early spring and fall to cool your home.

Bathrooms: If your bathroom has an exhaust fan in the ceiling, keep the entry door open during the summer. These fans exhaust into the attic or outside - warm air can enter through the fan opening and exhaust into the attic.

Hot Water Heaters: Insulate the exterior of your hot water heater - insulating blankets are available from your local home improvements store. Make sure you do not cover the flue on a gas heater! Also, drain the tank until the water runs clear - sediment builds up at the bottom of tank and takes more energy to heat your water.

Window - Door Caulking: Make sure your windows and doors are thoroughly caulked around the frames. If the caulk is old or cracked, remove it and clean the surface using Rubbing Alcohol. Then apply a new bead to seal the cracks.

Window - Door Weather Stripping: Make sure the weather stripping around your doors and frames is in good shape. If not, replace it to prevent hot air infiltration.

If you have storm windows on your house and saw condensation on them in the winter, inside air is escaping. Check your top & bottom stripping to see if it is cracked. Replace if possible. If not, pick up some crack filler foam from your local hardware store. Insert this round foam in the space at the top and bottom where the window frame and windows meet. Do not stretch the foam while inserting it - a putty knife aids the job. Generally this will block the air movement.

Thermostat: Set your thermostat up. If you do not have a programmable unit, you might want to either install one yourself or have it installed. When away from home, set the unit to raise the temperature - then kick the A/C down when you are due back. Newer units are fairly inexpensive and easy to install.

Note: If you have a Heat Pump or two stage Air Conditioner you must install a thermostat designed for these type systems. They are available at Home Depot and Lowes, plus many larger Hardware stores. Consult your Heat Pump or two stage A/C manual for recommended settings. Two Stage Compressor units are not designed for major swings in temperature without having to kick in the higher tonnage stage - this **defeats** the energy savings of these units. Newer models have the ability to run your furnace blower at the lower speed to maximize efficiency.

Furnace Filters: Make sure you change your filter on a regular basis. The newer pleated filters should be changed monthly. These get dirty faster and restrict air flow - this causes your furnace motor and A/C compressor to work harder and take longer to cool your home. Place a sticker next to the filter opening showing last change date.

We also recommend you install a **carbon monoxide detector** in the ceiling above your furnace / hot water heater area.

Ductwork: For summer, your main ductwork air flow should be out of the upper level vents. If your home is two story, then close down the lower level floor grates - open upper level grates fully. Some homes have main ductwork baffles that can direct airflow to certain parts of the house - these have a lever protruding from the main trunk lines. By opening / closing these, you should be able to determine the effects. Once you have them set, mark locations with a Sharpie™ pen: Winter and Summer.

Remember, **cold air falls**, so you want to get your air flow to the higher points within your home and allow it to cascade to the lower portions. If possible, shut off your basement vents totally and keep the basement door closed.

If your furnace incorporates a whole house humidifier and has a return duct for this unit, close off this return if possible! Leaving this open reduces the needed air flow for upper levels.

Humidity: In the summer, your house will be more comfortable and you can set the temperature higher by **reducing moisture** into your home. Leaving windows open during cool evenings allows nighttime moisture to enter house and cause the A/C to work harder to remove the moisture - this will reduce your comfort level! Remember that your A/C compressor **conditions** the air - it both **cools** and **removes humidity!**

Air Conditioner Compressors: Make sure the fins and coils on your outside A/C unit are free of lint - cottonwood seeds - debris. Using your garden hose set to a gentle spray, flush the fins and coils. This will assure maximum air flow when the unit is running, reducing its load. We recommend checking unit **every week** for buildup.

We also recommend that you have your **Freon** level checked by a qualified technician - this should be done when the outside temperature is 80° F or higher. If your unit is low, it may be due to a leak in your **A Coil**, which is located in your furnace - this can also be checked by a qualified technician. A/C units that are fully charged work most efficiently!

During the cooling season, make sure the drain hose from your **A Coil** pan is **not clogged**. A blocked hose, from older type pans, can allow water to build up and overflow into the furnace area, **damaging** the unit control panel - a very **costly repair!**