



Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor

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For Immediate Release
June 15, 2015

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Simple tips can help you manage your summer electric bill

Summer is nearly here and so are the higher electric bills that come with it.

“The start of summer is a reminder every year for all of us to use electricity more wisely,” said Indiana Utility Consumer Counselor David Stippler. “Taking small steps at little or no cost to the consumer will add up to savings, while also helping to ease the electric grid’s workload at its busiest time.”

There are a number of steps you can take to help keep your energy expenses in check. The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) recommends that you:

- Unplug chargers for cell phones and other devices when you’re not using them. Don’t underestimate how much “phantom power” is leaked from a device that’s plugged in but not being used. Power strips can help.
- Try not to use exhaust fans, since they can quickly pull cool air out of your home or business. But if you must use one, then only use it for a very short time.
- 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.
- Use ceiling fans when you’re in the room but turn them off when you leave. Be sure all ceiling fans are set to turn counter-clockwise.
- Keep blinds, shades, draperies, windows, and storm doors closed.
- Raise the thermostat a few degrees if no one will be home for more than 5 hours. When someone is there, keep it at the warmest comfortable temperature you can.
- Move TVs and appliances away from the thermostat because of the heat they give off. Move lamps away from the thermostat, too, especially if you’re using traditional incandescent bulbs.
- Make sure your air conditioner has a clean filter by changing or cleaning it regularly. Make sure vents aren’t covered by rugs or furniture.
- Schedule regular maintenance and tune-ups for your HVAC system. They’re important for both efficiency and safety.
- Look at your attic’s insulation if you haven’t done so in a few years. It may have settled over time and may not be giving your home as much protection as it once did.

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- Make sure your ductwork is properly sealed.
- Make sure your clothes dryer vent isn't clogged.
- 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.
- Think about getting rid of the extra refrigerator or freezer in the garage or basement. Many utilities will haul old refrigerators and freezers away at no charge if they are still working, and will pay you for them.
- Cook with a microwave or toaster during the day. If the temperature rises above 90 degrees, wait until evening to use the oven, wash dishes, do laundry, or use other large appliances.
- Look for the EnergyStar and WaterSense labels if you're in the market for new appliances. Energy and water efficiency standards have improved dramatically in recent years.
- Make sure you're using energy efficient light bulbs. Light emitting diode (LED) bulbs use less energy than compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs, which in turn use far less energy than incandescent bulbs. They produce much less heat, as well.
- Sign up for your utility's air conditioning load management program, if available.
- Call your utility or visit its website for information on energy efficiency incentives. Most electric utilities offer home energy assessments, online tools for finding ways to save, or both.

More tips are available at www.IN.gov/OUCC and at www.energysavers.gov. 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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