



## Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia

1333 H Street, N.W., 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, East Tower

Washington, D.C. 20005

(202) 626-5120

[www.dcpsc.org](http://www.dcpsc.org)

*People Serving the Community...*

Business Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Monday - Friday

# PEPCO's New Electric Rates Take Effect June 1st: What You Can Do to Keep Your Bills Down

PEPCO's Standard Offer Service (SOS) customers are likely to see an increase in their June bills due to new SOS rates, effective June 1, and increased usage levels due to warmer weather. As a result of the rate increase, the average annual increase in residential customers' bills will be about 12% (or about \$8 per month). Of course, actual bill increases will vary, depending on a customer's usage. Small commercial customers' bills will increase, on average, by about 10%.

**To minimize the impact of the rate increase, consider implementing energy efficiency measures that will help to control usage. Here are some simple, everyday measures you can take to keep your electric bills down this summer:**

**Central Air Conditioners:** Today's best air conditioners use 30%–50% less energy as air conditioners made in the mid 1970s. Even replacing a 10-year old unit with a newer, more efficient model may save 20%–40% of your cooling energy costs. Improper unit location and sizing, lack of insulation, and improper duct installation can greatly diminish efficiency.

Keep your house warmer than normal when you are away, and lower the thermostat setting to 78°F (26°C) only when you are at home and need cooling. Although thermostats can be adjusted manually, programmable thermostats will avoid any discomfort by returning temperatures to normal as you wake or return home.

**Room Air Conditioners:** Install in shaded areas on the north or west side of your home, if possible. Direct sunshine can reduce the unit's efficiency up to 10%. Do not position near other heat sources such as lamps or televisions. Set the fan speed on high, except on very humid days. A lower speed on humid days will cool your home better and will remove more moisture from the air because of slower air movement through the cooling equipment. Consider using an interior fan in conjunction with your air conditioner to spread the cooled air through your home without greatly increasing electricity use.

**Natural Passive Cooling:** These can include the use of ventilation, shade trees, and blinds to keep your home cool. Opening windows on

opposite sides of your home enhances cross ventilation driven by breezes. You can supplement with an energy-efficient fan. Keep shades drawn during the daytime on the sides of the home exposed to direct sunlight; on cooler days, sunlight can replace electric lighting to save energy.

**Lighting:** Artificial lighting consumes almost 15% of a household's electricity use. Use of new lighting technologies can reduce lighting energy use in homes by 50%–75%. Fluorescent lamps use 25%–35% of the energy used by incandescent lamps to provide the same amount of illumination. They also last about 10 times longer.

Incandescent lights should be turned off whenever they are not needed. It is probably more cost effective to turn off fluorescent lights if you leave a room for more than 15 minutes.

**Appliances and Home Electronics:** These account for 20% of electricity usage in the average home. Look for the ENERGY STAR and EnergyGuide labels when you shop for and compare energy-efficient appliances and home electronics.

**Water Heating:** Water heating can account for 14%–25% of the energy consumed in your home. To conserve, you can fix leaks, install low-flow fixtures, and purchase an energy-efficient dishwasher and clothes washer. For maximum water efficiency, select a shower head with a flow rate of less than 2.5 gpm.

You can save an additional 5%–12% of energy by installing a timer on

your electric water heater that turns it off at night when you don't use hot water and/or during your utility's peak demand times. You can install a timer yourself. They can cost \$60 or more, but they can pay for themselves in about 1 year. Timers aren't as cost effective or useful on gas water heaters because of their pilot lights.

**Personal Computers:** Personal computers use about the same amount of energy to startup as they use when they are on for about two seconds. To save energy, consider turning off the monitor if you aren't going to use your PC for more than 20 minutes, and both the CPU and monitor if you're not going to use your PC for more than 2 hours.

Many PCs available today come with a power-down or *sleep mode* feature for the CPU and monitor. ENERGY STAR computers power down to a sleep mode that consumes 15 watts or less of power, which is around 70% less electricity than a computer without power management features. Make sure you have the power-down feature set up on your PC through your operating system software. Note: Screen savers are not energy savers.

**Laundry:** Unlike dishwashers, clothes washers don't require a minimum temperature for optimum cleaning. Therefore, to reduce energy costs, you can use either cold or warm water for most laundry loads. Cold water is always sufficient for rinsing.

*Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy, 5/31/06*