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District of Columbia Public Service Commission

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The District of Columbia Public Service Commission is an independent agency established by Congress in 1913 to regulate electric, natural gas, and telephone companies in the District of Columbia.

Fact Sheet: What Can Be Done to Keep Bills Down

You can reduce electricity consumption and save money in the following ways:

Appliances and electronics: Purchase energy-efficient (Energy Star) products and operate them efficiently. Videogame consoles, plasma flat-screen TVs and desktop computers are major electricity guzzlers, even when left on stand-by. Switch off electronic devices at the source, rather than just from the remote control, which puts them on power-consuming stand-by mode.



Lighting: Purchase compact fluorescent bulbs instead of incandescent bulbs. Compact fluorescent bulbs last about 10 times longer. Turn off all lights if you leave a room for more than 15 minutes. Incorporate more daylight into your home by using energy-efficient windows and skylights.

Central Air Conditioning: Improper unit location and sizing, lack of insulation, and improper duct installation can greatly diminish the efficiency of your central air conditioner. 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 awake or return home.

Room 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.

Laundry: Washers do not require a minimum temperature for optimum cleaning. To reduce energy costs, you can use either cold or warm water for most laundry loads. Cold water is always sufficient for rinsing.



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Natural Passive Cooling: Natural Passive Cooling includes 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.

Water Heating: To conserve, 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 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 one year. Timers aren't as cost effective or useful on gas water heaters because of their pilot lights.



Home Energy Audits: To improve the overall energy efficiency of your home, consider requesting a Home Energy Audit from the D.C. Department of the Environment. For more information, call 202.671.3304 or 202.673.6733.

As of September 30, 2009

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