

New York AREA Issue Brief

The 12 Days of Energy Cost Savings

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It's that time of year again.

With the weather getting colder, the days shorter, and all types of gifts being bought, now is a great time for some electricity cost saving tips!

Below is a list of 25 simple energy-saving actions that can be taken over the next 12 days to reduce electricity bills and to save money heading into the New Year.

Day 1 – Washing Machine

- Wash and dry several loads in close intervals so the dryer does not need to fully re-heat between loads.
- Only wash full loads.

Day 2 – Refrigerator

- Cover liquids and wrap foods in refrigerators so the compressor works more efficiently.
- Make sure the coils behind the fridge are dusted and clean on a regular basis.
- Moisture on your refrigerator door means you should replace door seals to keep cold air in. Reduce the amount of food stored inside the door to lower the weight, or remove items that prevent proper door closure.

Day 3 – The Oven

- Where possible, microwave leftovers instead of using a conventional oven.
- Turn off kitchen fans as soon as they are no longer needed.

Day 4 – The Freezer

- A full freezer uses less electricity than an empty one. If your freezer will have a lot of open space for a while, consider filling it with frozen gallons of water.
- Don't keep the freezer too cold: The U.S. Department of Energy recommends zero degrees Fahrenheit.

Day 5 – Water Heating

- Insulate your hot-water storage tank to reduce the amount of energy used to re-heat water and prevent heat loss. Also be sure not to cover the thermostat.
- Locate exposed hot and cold water pipes and insulate the first six feet connecting to the water heater.

Day 6 – Home Heating

- Set the thermostat to 60 degrees when no one will be in the home for several hours.
- Clean or replace furnace filters monthly during the winter.

Day 7 – Electronics

- Stop gadgets, including video game consoles, from gobbling up power when not in use by using “smart power strips” that switch off electronics completely.
- Unplug cell phones and other chargers as these usually continue to drain electricity.

Day 8 – Insulation

- Seal any air leaks around windows, doors, walls, ceiling, plumbing fixtures, and electrical sockets. Quick fixes include caulking, sealing, and weather stripping all outside openings.
- Replace door bottoms with pliable gaskets to block cold air from coming in and warm air going out.

Day 9 – Lighting

- Maximize light by placing lamps in corners so they reflect light from two walls and using light-colored lampshades.
- Invest in LED lights for indoor and outdoor use. For holiday decorations, this could make a big difference on your bill as they use less electricity.

Day 10 – Windows

- Close curtains and shades at night to protect against cold drafts.
- As necessary, tape heavy duty, clear plastic sheets around window frames experiencing significant drafts.

Day 11 – Home Heating

- Use ceiling fans to circulate warm air, especially in rooms with high ceilings.
- Spend a little more time and install a smart or WiFi thermostat to manage heating patterns from your computer, tablet, or smart phone when you are not home.

Day 12 – General

- Always turn off the lights when you leave the room.
- Consider covering bare floors with carpeting or rugs to add comfort and ensure heat retention.

These energy savings tips only begin to scratch the surface. For information about dozens more ways to use electricity more efficiently, and to save money year round, please see the following resources:

U.S. Department of Energy, “Energy Saver: Tips on Saving Money & Energy at Home”

Link: http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2014/09/f18/61628_BK_EERE-EnergySavers_w150.pdf

Con Edison, “Customer Central Energy - Energy Savings”

Link: <http://www.coned.com/customercentral/energysavingtips.asp>

Progress-Duke Energy, “100 Ways to Save Energy at Home”

Link: <https://www.progress-energy.com/carolinas/home/save-energy-money/energy-saving-tips-calculators/100-tips.page>