

## Georgia Power releases summer energy conservation tips

ATLANTA— The temperatures outside are already heating up. Now is the best time to start thinking about ways to save on your electric bill.

To help keep those prices low and cut down your energy bill, try these helpful energy saving tips around your house all summer.

### Keep your cool:

During the summer, your air conditioner is the biggest user of electricity. For many homes, it accounts for more than half of the summer electric bill.

- Set your thermostat at 78 degrees or higher and leave it there. For every degree below that setting, you'll use 3 to 5 percent more electricity. For example, the savings is about \$4 per degree for the average monthly residential bill for cooling only (based on 2,400 sq. ft. home). A customer raising the thermostat from 73 to 78 degrees would save \$20 per month on their average monthly bill of \$95 to \$120 during the summer, or about 17 percent.
- Set the thermostat even higher when at work or away from home for long periods of time, but no more than five degrees higher.
- Change or clean your air conditioner filter regularly to maximize the unit's cooling potential. Dirty filters restrict airflow and reduce efficiency.
- Adjust your ceiling fan to turn counter-clockwise in the summer.
- Check your windows and doors for a tight fit. Apply weather stripping or caulking if needed.
- Clear outside units of plants or brush so they can "breathe."

### Proper insulation:

- Increase attic insulation, which can save up to 30 percent on cooling and heating costs.
- Insulation is measured in R-value, which is a measure of resistance to heat flow. So the higher the R-value, the better the insulation value.
- Experts recommend you use an R-value of R-30 in ceiling areas
- Use fans whenever possible. Install ceiling fans (clockwise rotation) in the rooms you use most.
- Purchase a higher SEER rated unit when replacing cooling equipment or a heat pump. The higher the SEER (Seasonal Energy Efficiency Rating), the more efficient the unit. Experts recommend a 12 SEER.

### Cool kitchen tips:

- Whenever possible, cook a lot of meals at the same time. This uses less energy than when you cook each meal separately.
- If you're baking, avoid opening the oven door. This lets out 20 percent of the heat. Use a cooking timer instead.
- Use pots and pans that match the size of the burners on your stove. This allows more heat to the pan and less heat will be lost to surrounding air.

- Try to use the range instead of the oven. Or better yet, turn on the microwave or use a pressure cooker. Both use less power than a standard electric range.

### **Using the refrigerator:**

Refrigerators run all the time. But if you don't watch how you use and maintain it, you could increase your power bill.

- Choose the right size refrigerator for your needs. Larger models use more energy. Open and close the refrigerator door quickly. Know what you want before opening the door.
- Make sure your refrigerator door seals are airtight. Check it by closing a piece of paper in the door, half in and half out. If you can pull the paper out easily, you may need to make some adjustments or replace the seal.
- Keep your food covered. Moisture buildup in the refrigerator makes the air inside harder to cool.

### **Dishwasher use:**

It's convenient and quick, but running the dishwasher all the time can add up on the power bill.

- Run the dishwasher, dryer and the stove after the sun goes down to avoid adding heat to your house during the hottest part of the day.
- When using the dishwasher, turn off the drying cycle if you don't need dishes right away.
- Wait until the dishwasher is full before running it. Partial loads can use just as much water and power as a full load.
- Scrape dishes before loading them into the dishwasher so you don't have to rinse them. If they need rinsing, use cold water.

### **Lighting:**

You've heard it before, but one of the best ways to save energy is to turn off lights when you're not using them. Never leave too many on when you're away from home.

- Use fluorescent lighting when possible. They last about 10 times longer than incandescent lamps. And they can produce four times more light than standard incandescent, for the same amount of energy.
- Use one large bulb instead of several small ones in areas where bright light is needed.
- Use smaller lamps in work areas, like sewing areas and computer desks, so you don't light the entire room.
- Do some decorating. Lighter colored walls, drapes, blinds and upholstery reflect light. Dark colors absorb heat and require more artificial light.

For more information on how to save energy, contact your local Georgia Power office, visit the Georgia Power web site at [www.georgiapower.com](http://www.georgiapower.com), or call Georgia Power at 1-800-524-2421.

Georgia Power is the largest subsidiary of Southern Company, one of the nation's largest generators of electricity. The company is an investor-owned, tax-paying utility, serving customers in 57,000 of the state's 59,000 square miles. Georgia Power's rates are more than

15 percent below the national average, and its 2 million customers are in all but six of Georgia's 159 counties.