



Consumer Alert

Beat the Heat and \$ave: Hot Tips for Staying Cool



Did you know?

- The closer the indoor temperature is to the outdoor temperature, the lower your overall cooling costs will be.
- Each degree you raise the thermostat can save up to 3-5% on cooling costs.
- Many of the same techniques that save energy in the winter also help in the summer. For example, insulating, caulking, and weatherstripping help keep the heat out in summer and the heat in during winter.

With warm weather upon us, we find ourselves running for ways to stay cool. The Michigan Public Service Commission offers the following steps as some of the ways homeowners and businesses can take to reduce energy consumption, stay cool, and save on energy bills.

Cooling Tips

- When the temperature is moderate, turn off the air conditioner, open windows, and use fans.
- Close curtains and shades on windows during the day to keep the heat from the sun outside rather than inside.
- Consider using a dehumidifier instead of turning on the air conditioning.
- Get rid of the hot air. For example, use an exhaust fan to blow hot air out of the kitchen while cooking.
- Avoid activities that add heat or humidity to your home during the hottest parts of the day. For example, use your dishwasher during the cooler part of the day or simply let dishes air dry rather than use the dishwasher's heater.

Use Air Conditioning Efficiently

- If you must use air conditioning, set the room thermostat as high as possible. Believe it or not 78 degrees is often considered a comfortable indoor temperature.
- When leaving a home or building for more than five hours, raise the thermostat five to ten degrees, or use a programmable thermostat.
- When possible, locate a window air-conditioner, or the compressor unit of a central air-conditioner, on a side of a home or building that is shaded. Direct sunlight falling on an air-conditioning unit increases its workload.
- Keep the compressor unit of a central air-conditioner free from leaves and other debris that can clog vents.
- Keep the cooling system well tuned with periodic maintenance by service professionals. Clean or replace the air filter once a month or as needed.
- Shut the vents or close off unoccupied rooms. Doing so can save 5-10% on your cooling costs.

Around your home or business

- To block solar heat in the summer but let much of it in during the winter, plant deciduous trees on the south and west sides of a home or building.
- Shrubs and groundcover plants can also shade the ground and pavement around a home or building and can reduce the surrounding air temperature.
- A hedge can be planted to shade a sidewalk or driveway and keep solar heat from being absorbed by the concrete.
- Climbing vines on a lattice or trellis can also be used to shade areas around a home or building – while admitting cooling breezes to the shaded area.

Other Electricity Saving Measures

- Use electric ovens, dishwashers, clothes washers and dryers, and other large appliances or office equipment in the early morning or late evening hours whenever possible. These are big electricity users and shifting the time of use will reduce the potential stress to Michigan's electric system at peak times.
- If possible, replace older, inefficient appliances with updated models. If purchasing a new appliance or air conditioner, look for the "Energy Star" logo, which indicates a high efficiency product.

Tax Credits for Energy Efficiency

Take advantage of federal tax credits that are available for home energy efficiency improvements made in 2009 and 2010. Tax credits of up to \$1,500 are available to customers who purchase and install energy efficient windows, insulation, doors, roofs, and heating and cooling equipment. Credits vary according to the improvement made. For more details on the tax credits available, visit the [U.S. Department of Energy Web site](#).

Tax credits are also available from the State of Michigan for similar types of home energy efficiency improvements. A credit of up to \$150 (married filing jointly) and \$75 (single taxpayer) is available for eligible improvements. For more details on this tax credit, visit the Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth's [tax credit website](#).

Some additional tips for businesses include:

- Set fax machines and printers for sleep mode when not in use. Also, network one printer for several users.
- Make sure the power management feature is enabled on computers and set to the shortest acceptable time for your operation. Also, use laptops in lieu of other personal computers.
- Turn off copiers and computers (or at least monitors) at night and during the weekends.



To Learn More

Additional information can be found online at <http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/> and www.michigan.gov/mpscalerts