



— 101 —

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIPS



— 101 ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIPS —



ENERGY-SAVING MEASURES TO BETTER MANAGE YOUR HOME ENERGY COSTS

FEATURES

- Introduction
- Lighting Tips
- Kitchen Tips
- Laundry Tips
- Water Heating Tips
- Heating and Cooling Tips
- Miscellaneous Tips
- Stearns Electric Programs



**DO A
LITTLE.
SAVE
A LOT.**

Thank you for your interest in energy efficiency and conservation. Energy conservation is an important part of reducing dependence on foreign oil, meeting our future energy needs and improving the environment.

Stearns Electric Association is Minnesota's 9th largest electric distribution cooperative serving over 27,000 homes, farms and businesses in Central Minnesota. We are dedicated to providing a high standard of service at competitive rates and are committed to environmental stewardship.

We all know the wonderful things electricity makes possible - TV, radio, video games, computers. Not to mention that electricity



keeps us warm in the winter, cool in the summer, cooks our food, heats our water, cleans our clothes and keeps our homes and schools bright. Electricity is always ready to make our lives a little easier. Because electricity and its millions of uses are such a prevalent part of our lives, it is sometimes hard to gauge exactly how much of it we use as we work and play.

Today, more and more people are looking for ways to manage their energy use and reduce costs. Stearns Electric has always placed a priority on promoting energy efficiency to our members. The Cooperative consistently budgets over \$500,000 in rebates for energy efficiency measures taken by our member-consumers.

To help you conserve energy and save money, we have compiled a list of low-cost or no-cost energy-saving measures to better manage your home's energy costs.

We've also included some information on energy-saving programs offered by Stearns Electric. As a member owned cooperative, we're owned by you, our electric consumers. Helping you save energy and keep more money in your pocket is part of our mission and values.

If you have questions that are not addressed in this guide, please call us at (800) 962-0655 or visit our website at www.stearnsselectric.org.



— 101 ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIPS —

LIGHTING



- 1 Turn off any unnecessary lighting.
- 2 Replace any light bulb that burns more than one hour per day with its equivalent LED light bulb.
- 3 Replace outdoor lighting with its outdoor-rated equivalent LED light bulb.
- 4 Use outdoor security lights with a photocell and/or a motion sensor.
- 5 Use fixtures with electronic ballasts and T-8, 32-watt fluorescent lamps.

Traditional lighting can amount to 12% of your monthly energy use. Energy saving light bulbs can slice lighting costs by 75%.

— 101 ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIPS —

KITCHEN





6

Use your refrigerator's anti-sweat feature only if necessary.

7

Switch your refrigerator's power-saver to "ON," if available.

8

Clean refrigerator coils annually.

9

Set the refrigeration temperature to 34°-37° F and freezer temperature to 0°-5° F.

10

Defrost refrigerator coils annually.

11

Unplug unused refrigerators or freezers.

12

Use microwave for cooking when possible.

13

When cooking on the oven range, use pot lids to help food cook faster.

14

If you are heating water, use hot tap water instead of cold.

15

Remember to use the kitchen exhaust fan while cooking and turn it off after cooking.

16

Let hot food cool before storing it in the refrigerator.

17

Rinse dirty dishes with cold water before putting them into the dishwasher.

18

Use cold water for the garbage disposal.

19

Only run your dishwasher when it is fully loaded.

20

Use the air-dry cycle instead of heat-dry cycle to dry dishes.



LAUNDRY



21

Use bath towels at least twice before washing them.

22

Only do full loads of laundry.

23

If you must do small loads, adjust the water level in the washing machine to match the load size.



24

Using warm water instead of hot can cut a laundry load's energy use in half. Cold water will save even more.

25

Always use cold-water rinse.

26

Clean your dryer's lint trap before each load.

27

Make sure that the outdoor dryer exhaust vent is not blocked or clogged.

28

Verify dryer vent hose is tightly connected via the inside wall fitting.

29

Check that the dryer vent hose is tightly connected to dryer.

30

In hot weather, avoid running the dryer during the day.

31

Minimize clothes drying time and use an auto moisture sensor on the dryer if available.

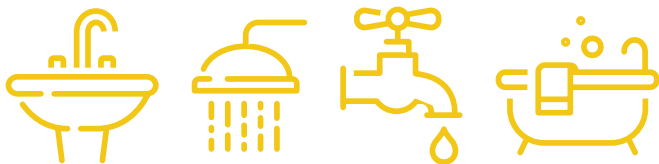
32

Dry consecutive loads to harvest heat remaining in dryer from last load.

33

Air dry clothing or use an old-fashioned clothes line.

WATER HEATING



34

Set your water heater thermostat no higher than 120° F.

35

For households with 1 or 2 members, a 115° F setting may work fine.

36

Install a water-heater wrap or blanket per manufacturer's instructions.

37

Drain 1-2 gallons from bottom of water heater each year to reduce sediment build-up.

38

Install heat traps on hot and cold water lines when it's time to replace your water heater.

39

Insulate exposed hot water lines.

40

Limit shower length to 5-7 minutes.

41

Install water saving shower heads.

42

Fix dripping faucets.

43

Don't let water run while you are shaving.

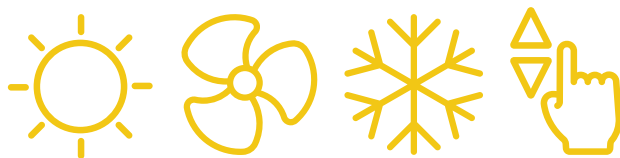
44

Don't let the water run while you are brushing your teeth.





HEATING & COOLING



45 Set thermostats to 78° F in summer, 68° F in winter.

46 Run ceiling paddle fans on medium, blowing down in summer.

47 Run ceiling paddle fans on low, blowing up in winter.

48 Change HVAC filters monthly.

49 When installing new air filters, make sure they are facing in the correct direction.

50 When heating or cooling, keep windows locked.

51 Insulate electric wall outlets and wall switches with foam pads.

52 Caulk along baseboards with clear sealant.

53 Install a programmable thermostat.

54 Caulk around plumbing penetrations that come through walls beneath bathroom and kitchen sinks.

55 Caulk electrical wire penetrations at the top of interior walls.

56 Close shades and drapes at night to keep heat in during the winter.

57 Make sure drapes and shades are open to catch free solar heat in the winter.

58 Close shades and drapes during the day to help keep your home cooler in the summer.

59 Ensure the attic access door closes tightly.

60 Insulate the attic access door.

61 Make sure insulation in your attic does not block soffit vents.

62 Do not close off unused rooms that are conditioned by forced-air systems.

63 Do not close supply air registers.

64 Have your duct work checked for leaks.

65 Ensure return air grilles are not blocked by furniture or bookcases.

66 Ensure windows and doors are properly weather-stripped.

67 Make sure outside soffit vents are not blocked.

68 Do not use rooftop power ventilators for attic exhaust as they may evacuate conditioned air from your home.

69 Have your HVAC system serviced once per year by a NATE-certified technician.

70 Monitor your home's relative humidity in the summer. If it consistently stays in the 60-percent range or higher, ask your HVAC technician about lowering your central air conditioning unit's indoor fan speed.

Heating and air conditioning are usually the largest energy loads in a home and responsible for 50% of your monthly energy spend.

71 Ensure window AC units are weather-stripped.

72 Keep “fresh-air” vents on window AC units closed.

73 Change your HVAC system filters when dirty by the manufacturers recommendations.

74 Minimize use of electric space heaters.

75 Install a door sweep on your storm doors and/or garage door.

76 When using the fireplace, reduce heat loss by opening the damper in the bottom of the firebox (if provided) or open the nearest window slightly.

77 Keep fireplace dampers closed when not in use.

78 Verify your ducts are tightly connected to your HVAC equipment and well sealed.

79 If in an unconditioned space, verify your ducts are tightly connected to your HVAC equipment.





79

Verify all outdoor doors (including storm doors) close and seal tightly.

80

Turn off bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans 15 minutes after the job is complete or install 15-minute timers on bathroom ventilator fans.

81

Always run your HVAC system fan on "AUTO." Running it on "ON" uses more electricity and can decrease your air conditioner's ability to remove moisture.

82

Keep your garage door closed. A warmer garage in the winter and cooler garage in the summer will save energy.

83

Seal basement sills and band joists with durable caulking or foam sealant.

84

Ensure your floor registers are not blocked with rugs, drapes or furniture.

85

Ensure your outdoor heat pump/air conditioning unit is kept clean and free of debris.



86

Seal from the inside. Seal gaps and holes in walls, floors and ceilings with caulk or foam sealant.

87

In the winter, use heavy-duty, clear sheets of plastic on the inside of windows to reduce the amount of cold air entering your home.

88

Outside your home, caulk around all penetrations including telephone, electrical, cable, gas, water spigots, dryer vents, etc.

Air sealing is an inexpensive way to lower energy costs and improve comfort.

89

Caulk around storm and basement windows.

— 101 ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIPS —

MISCELLANEOUS



90 Turn any electronics off when not in use.

91 Check for energy saving settings on TVs like automatic brightness control or sleep mode.

92 Enable auto power down or automatic sleep function on gaming consoles.

93 Make sure electric blankets are turned off in the morning.

94 Turn off stereos and radios when not in use.

95 Remember to unplug hair curling irons and blow dryers.

96 Plug electronic devices such as cable boxes, printers and TVs into smart power strips.

97 When buying a new computer, consider a laptop as it uses less energy than a desktop.

98 Verify livestock water tank heaters are off when not needed.

99 Make sure heat tape is off when not needed.

100 Unplug battery chargers when not needed.

101 Ensure all new appliances, electronics and lights you purchase are Energy Star labeled.



A man with short dark hair, wearing a dark blue button-down shirt and khaki pants with a brown belt, stands with his arms crossed in a snowy outdoor setting. He is smiling warmly at the camera. The background is a soft-focus winter scene with snow-covered trees.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

As you can see, electricity touches nearly every part of our lives. The good news is that you can control your electric use.

Even better, Stearns Electric is ready and willing to do whatever it takes to help make your home, farm or business as energy efficient as possible.

Stearns Electric's EnergyWise® programs and rebates provide incentives to assist members in making their homes, farms and businesses more energy efficient. With these programs, our members save money while helping the Cooperative keep electric rates down.

ENERGY STAR APPLIANCE REBATES

Making your home more energy efficient with Energy Star products can help reduce high energy bills, improve comfort and help protect the environment. Energy Star appliance rebates are available through Stearns Electric Association.

DUAL FUEL HEATING

In a Dual Fuel Heating system, your electric heat source is used in conjunction with an alternative backup heat source, such as natural gas, propane or fuel oil. By participating in this program, you allow Stearns Electric to turn off (control) your electric heat system when demand for electricity is at its highest, which helps save money and conserve energy. During control periods, your home's backup system provides the heat you need.

STORAGE HEATING

In a Storage Heating system, you use either a room storage heating, slab storage heating or furnace storage heating system. This program helps conserve energy by charging your electric heating system during off-peak hours when electric costs are lowest. Each night your storage heating system will charge and then stored heat is distributed throughout the day.

STORED WATER HEATING

The Stored Water Heating program encourages energy and water conservation. This program conserves energy by heating water during off-peak hours when electric costs are at their lowest.

CYCLED CENTRAL AIR CONDITIONING

The Cycled Central Air Conditioning program conserves energy by cycling central air conditioners and air source heat pumps, 15 minutes on, 15 minutes off, only when there is peak demand for electricity.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more details, visit www.stearnselectric.org or give us a call during business hours at (800) 962-0655.



member driven.
community focused.
energy smart.

(800) 962-0655

WWW.STEARNSELECTRIC.ORG

—
SAVE ENERGY. SAVE MONEY.
—