

Summertime energy efficiency & conservation: Save energy, money and the environment!

Use energy wisely!

Shocked by the increases in your electricity or gas utility costs? Basic conservation practices can help prevent electricity power alerts and rolling blackouts, reduce your energy bill and help improve summertime air quality.

Why we care

The majority of San Joaquin Valley electricity comes from burning natural gas. While natural gas is the cleanest available fuel, its combustion still produces air pollution, primarily oxides of nitrogen with very fine particulate matter. These pollutants contribute to health problems. Every kilowatt you save is a kilowatt that does not need to be generated, thereby sparing the air. It also is a kilowatt you will not need to buy.

Summertime tips

Energy use typically increases in the summer as people crank up their air conditioners. Unfortunately, these units run at peak energy use times, further straining energy supplies. The Consumer Energy Center (at www.flexyourpower.ca.gov) offers these tips for reducing summertime energy consumption and improving the efficiency of existing appliances.

1. Turn up your thermostat

Set your thermostat at 78 degrees when you're home and turn it off or set it at 85 degrees when you're away. Ceiling or room fans help cool the room and allow you to set the thermostat higher. You can save one to three percent a month for each degree the thermostat is set above 72 degrees.

2. Operate swimming pool filters and cleaning sweeps efficiently

Reduce the operating time of your pool filter and automatic cleaning sweep to four or five hours, and only during off-peak time. Save one to two percent for each hour of reduced filtering time.

3. Replace air conditioner filters

Dirty filters restrict airflow and cause systems to run longer. Replace air filters monthly and you can save one to two percent.

4. Plug your home's leaks

- ★ To keep cool air in your home, weather-strip, seal, and caulk leaky doors and windows, and install foam gaskets behind outlet covers. This can save up to two percent on your energy bill.
- ★ If your windows are due for replacement, Energy Star® windows can make your house more comfortable in the summer and year-round.
- ★ Also, leaking air ducts account for 25 percent of cooling costs in an average home. So, have your ducts tested and have any leaks or restrictions repaired by a qualified contractor.



The Valley Air District promotes energy efficiency and conservation to reduce air pollution.



Turn thermostats up or off during the day when on one is home to save electricity.



Improved insulation can reduce the amount of heat entering your home and the amount of cool air escaping.



Ceiling fans effectively improve room ventilation and reduce air temperature.



Trees and vines shade your home from the sun. Also, a yard with grass or ground cover is up to 15% cooler than bare ground.



Incandescent lighting uses 75% more electricity than fluorescent lighting. Switch to fluorescent and save!

5. Install a whole house fan

A whole house fan is permanently installed in your attic. It draws cool air into your home through the windows while forcing hot air out through attic vents. Use after sundown when the outside temperature drops below 80 degrees, and in the early morning to cool your house and help reduce your air conditioning use. You can save up to five percent with whole house fans.

6. Install window shading or plant a tree

- ★ Install patio covers, awnings, and solar window screens to shade your home from the sun. For additional future savings, strategically plant trees, shrubs and vines to shade your home. Providing additional shade can save up to 5 percent.
- ★ Solar control window films applied to existing glass in windows and doors are an effective way to conserve energy anytime air conditioning might be required. These films can also reduce exposure to ultraviolet radiation and reduce glare.

7. Invest in a new air conditioner unit

If your air conditioner is on the way out, buy an Energy Star® air conditioner and save yourself up to 10 percent in energy costs.

8. Increase attic insulation

If existing insulation level is R-19 or less, consider insulating your attic to at least R-30.

9. Turn it off when you are on vacation

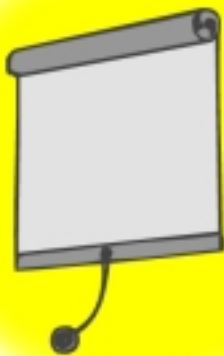
- ★ Turn off major appliances (not including your refrigerator and freezer, of course). Better yet, unplug them. Many appliances continue to draw power, even if they're not turned on.
- ★ Turn the electric water heater off or your gas water heater to pilot.
- ★ Turn off your swimming pool and spa heaters.

Reducing energy consumption at home

- ★ Install programmable thermostats so when you are not home you can keep your house warmer in the summer and cooler in the winter.
- ★ Set the water heater temperature to 140 degrees. Insulate the water heater and the first five feet of piping.
- ★ Clean refrigerator coils. Dusty coils make it work harder than necessary. Unplug an unused second refrigerator.
- ★ Turn off unneeded lights.
- ★ Replace old incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent lights. Fluorescent lights can last up to ten times as long as old-fashioned bulbs and save approximately 75 percent of the electricity of incandescent bulbs.
- ★ Turn off computers and entertainment equipment when not in use.
- ★ Look for the "Energy Star®" label when shopping for appliances. Visit www.epa.gov for more information on the Energy Star® program. Compare your home's energy efficiency to comparable homes and learn how to improve efficiency.



Wait until you have full loads before running your dish or clothes washer.



Shade screens or tints on windows or doors are effective means for cooling.



Become a "Spare the Air" Employer Partner online @ www.valleyair.org or call (559) 230-5800.

- ★ Delay the use of dishwashers, clothes washers and dryers until you have a full load. Consider hand washing and drying dishes.
- ★ Consider using an Energy Efficient Mortgage to purchase an efficient home or make necessary improvements to an existing home. Energy Efficiency Mortgages provide special benefits for people who purchase homes that are already energy efficient. They can also provide extra funds for people willing to install energy-saving improvements that make their new homes more efficient. This funding is available through the Federal Housing Administration, the Veterans Administration and even such conventional lending programs as Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae. The Federal Consumer Information Center (www.pueblo.gsa.gov) has more information on these mortgages.

Reducing energy consumption at the workplace

- ★ Implement a system to alert employees of high demand days. Use e-mail, voice mail or public address announcements.
- ★ Initiate load reduction measures for "Stage 2" and "Stage 3" alerts. Encourage employees to turn off lights, personal computers and appliances not in use.
- ★ In areas with sufficient daylight, turn off lights.
- ★ Ensure the "Energy Star" and "low power standby" mode features are enabled on appliances.
- ★ Replace incandescent lighting with florescent lighting. Changing just one 75-watt incandescent bulb to an efficient florescent bulb can save \$14.31 in annual energy costs (based on eight hours of use a day).
- ★ Schedule high electrical energy-use processes during off-peak periods (2 to 6 p.m. in the summer).
- ★ Install motion sensors and separate lighting circuits, where feasible, which turn off unneeded lights.
- ★ Investigate rebate programs that can help businesses buy energy-efficient equipment or financial incentives for builders who construct energy-efficient commercial buildings.
- ★ Become a Spare the Air Employer Partner. Register online at www.valleyair.org/sta/staforms.htm. On Spare the Air days when air quality is especially poor, encourage employees to practice energy conservation and emission-reducing behaviors.