



Holiday Energy Conservation & Safety Tips

The festive season has arrived and you can reflect the joy of the holidays in your home while also focusing on safety and keeping utility costs down. Be safe and avoid energy bill spikes this holiday season with these easy tips.

Decorations –

- **REDUCE FIRE HAZARDS** – Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Discard damaged sets or repair them before using. When placing electrical cords keep away from water and out of high-traffic areas where people could trip on them, and never use more than three sets of lights per single extension cord. Turn off all lights on trees and other decorations when you go to bed or leave the house. Lights could short and start a fire.
- **CHOOSE LED LIGHTS** - When purchasing holiday decorations, make the switch to LED lights. LED's are more efficient, use up to 90% less energy than incandescent, and last much longer! They also stay cool to the touch and produce less heat, so your home is safer. You can save even more by using those new LED lights on a timer.
- **DO IT YOURSELF ORNAMENTS** – Add extra elegance and reduce your energy use by making your own decorations rather than purchasing new energy consuming decor. Pine cones, gingerbread cookies cut into shapes, paper chains made of used paper or junk mail, or ribbons made from old wrapping material all make great recycled ornaments.

Entertaining –

- **GUEST SAFETY** - Always use a designated driver to make sure you and other guests get home safe after a holiday party. If guests are staying in your home, consider night-lights in case they need to get up in the middle of the night and always remember to keep medications in a safe spot, away from children.
- **GIVE THE FURNACE THE DAY OFF** - Holidays often bring extra guests, which usually means lots of food and cooking. When your guests arrive, be sure to turn down the heat a few degrees—the combination of the stove, hot food, and warm bodies should keep the house comfortable.
- **DO SOMETHING FUN** - Instead of firmly planting in front of the TV for the day, consider getting some fresh air or playing a board game. Take advantage of time together with friends and family while decreasing your energy usage. Try bundling up and playing football outside instead of watching it. Make sure the winners get to go through the pie line first!

In the Kitchen –

- **CHECK SAFETY EQUIPMENT** – Make sure all carbon monoxide and smoke detectors in your home are properly installed and in good working order. This is also a good time to inspect, replace or refill fire extinguishers as needed.



- USE SMART FOOD STORAGE - Hot food placed directly in your fridge will make it use more energy. Let your holiday cooking cool to room temperature before you put it in the fridge. If you are defrosting something, take it out of the freezer and put it in the fridge so that when it thaws out, it helps the fridge stay cold, saving energy.
- USE THE OVEN EFFICIENTLY - Use the oven light to check your holiday baking. Opening the door causes the oven to work harder and use more energy to reheat itself. Every time you open the door, the internal temperature can drop 25-75 degrees, and requires more time to cook.
- WASHING DISHES – Don't wash dishes by hand because the dishwasher uses less than half as much energy and water per cycle. After the meal, be sure to fill the dishwasher to capacity and apply the air-dry feature before running it to save water and energy.

Gift Giving –

- AVOID THEFT - Thieves are looking for homes with lots of valuable holiday gifts, so don't give them an invitation. Keep gifts out of windows and don't leave boxes from expensive electronics at the curb. Break down these boxes, and place them in trash bags for a more secure option.
- SHOP SMART—Read labels and purchase eco-friendly items. Opt for products contained in recycled materials or ones that use less packaging. Use cloth bags to take items home, or if using the plastic bags, recycle them. Finally, when purchasing electronics, look for the Energy Star label.

Leaving Your Home For the Holidays –

- ADJUST THE THERMOSTAT - Before you leave, program your thermostat to reduce the heating set point (HEATING CLIMATE) or raise the set point (COOLING CLIMATE) by 3-5 degrees to save on electricity or gas bills while you are away.
- LOCK UP & UNPLUG DEVICES - Do a final walkthrough of your home to ensure all windows and doors are locked, and unplug nonessential devices. This will not only save money on energy use, but it will help avoid electrical problems.

We wish you and your family a safe and happy holiday season! For more ways to save, visit your community office or community website for helpful links and additional energy conservation tips.