



POWERLINES

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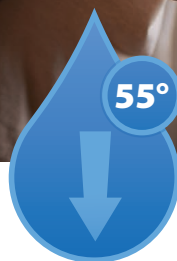
Official Newsletter of Tri-State Electric Membership Corporation

Know the Dew Point Before Leaving Windows Open at Night

When fall nights turn from crispy to comfortably crisp, your first instinct might be to fling the windows open and let that cool breeze in. It feels like free air conditioning.

But doing this without checking the humidity can backfire. If the outdoor air is damp, you are inviting hidden moisture directly into your home. Overnight, your walls, wood floors and furniture will absorb that humidity like dry sponges.

The next day, as the sun warms the house, your air conditioner must work twice as hard. An A/C unit does not just cool the air; it has to wring out all that water vapor first.



Running a compressor to dehumidify your home is incredibly energy intensive.

To avoid this, use the dew-point rule. Check your local weather app before opening the windows. If the dew point is 55 degrees or lower, the air is dry and comfortable. In that case, go ahead and open up after dark. If it is higher than 55 degrees, keep the windows shut.

When the dew point is low, you can practice “night flushing.” Open the windows at night to pull in the dry, cool air. Then, shut everything tight early in the morning before the sun hits the walls. You will trap the cool air inside and keep the humidity out.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Don't let phantom energy haunt your electric bill this October. Many electronics continue using electricity even when they're turned off. TVs, gaming systems, coffee makers and phone chargers can quietly draw power around the clock. While each device uses only a small amount, the energy waste can add up over time. Before heading out for Halloween fun, unplug devices you don't use regularly or plug them into a smart power strip that automatically cuts power when equipment is off. It's a simple trick that can help keep phantom energy waste in check.

—Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy



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Air Filters Matter More Than You Think



Air filters are one of the simplest parts of a home heating and cooling system, but they play an important role in comfort and energy efficiency.

When filters become clogged with dust and debris, the entire system must work harder to move air through the home.

A dirty filter restricts airflow, which can cause the HVAC system to run longer to reach the desired temperature. That extra run time can increase electricity use and add to monthly energy bills. In some cases, restricted airflow can also contribute to unnecessary wear on system components.

Clean filters help maintain proper airflow and allow the system to operate more efficiently. They also help capture dust and pollen that circulate through the home.

Check your air conditioner's air filters at least once a month during the summer.

Replacing or cleaning an air filter is a quick and inexpensive task that can make a noticeable difference in the quality of air you and your family breathe inside your home.

Lower water heater temperature

Most major home appliances are set to run as safely as possible, but water heaters are a major exception. When they are shipped from the factory, they are sometimes preset to 140 degrees.

This high setting also can waste energy. Keeping 50 gallons of water at 140 degrees all day and night requires a massive amount of "standby" energy. It is also hot enough to cause serious burns in just five seconds.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommends turning your water heater down to 120 degrees.

The math is simple. For every 10 degrees you lower the temperature, you save roughly 3%-5% on your water heating costs. So, lowering the thermostat from 140 degrees to 120 degrees can easily save you energy and money.

To change it, locate the dial on your water heater. On electric models, you may need to unscrew a small access panel to find the thermostat dial. On gas models, it is usually right on the front valve.

A temperature of 120 degrees is still plenty hot for



comfortable showers and running your dishwasher. It also slows down mineral buildup inside your tank, helping your water heater last longer.