

About the Office of Consumer Counsel:

The Colorado Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC), a division within the Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA), represents residential, small business, and agricultural utility consumers as a class in electric and natural gas proceedings before the Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC). The OCC does not regulate; it advises and advocates on behalf of consumers. The OCC helps consumers by lowering or eliminating proposed utility rate increases and by ensuring that utility rates, regulations and policies are more equitable for residential, small business and agricultural consumers.

We Want to Hear From You

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Colorado Office of Consumer Counsel's

Energy & Money Saving Tips for Residential and Small Business Customers



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Energy and Money Saving Tips for Residential Consumers

Get Educated!

Familiarize yourself with your utility bill. Make monthly comparisons and identify energy efficiency opportunities and save money. According to national averages from the U.S. Department of Energy, 44% of utility bills resulting from energy usage are heating and cooling the home, 33% is from lighting, cooking and other appliances, 14% is due to water heating and 9% is used by the fridge alone.

A Programmable Thermostat Could be Your Solution

One simple solution to managing your heating and cooling system is to adjust your thermostat temperature according to your habits, preferences and the temperature outside. The closer your thermostat setting is to the outside temperature, the more you'll save.

Switch to LED Bulbs and Save!

Light-emitting diodes (LED) bulbs use less power, with an estimated energy efficiency of 80%-90% when compared to traditional lighting and conventional light bulbs. Because of the long lifespan of LED lights, the maintenance work is significantly less, meaning you'll see big energy savings.

Beware of Vampire Energy

Cell phone and battery chargers that are plugged in but not in use are often referred to as "Energy Vampires". According to Energy.gov, the average charger consumes 0.26 watts of energy when not in use and 2.24 watts when connected to your phone. Alone, one charger won't make an impact, but collectively energy vampires can be responsible for 10% of your energy bill. Always unplug chargers when not in use.

Set your water heater to no higher than 120°F

This isn't just energy smart—it's also safer, since it reduces the likelihood of accidental burns. If you lower the temperature by 10°F you'll save 3% to 5% on your water heating costs. That's a savings of \$6 to \$10 a year.

Check Your Insulation Levels

Did you know that 9 out of 10 homes in the U.S. are under-insulated? You could be wasting up to 20% of the energy used to heat and cool your home through air leakage and poor insulation. That's about the same amount of energy wasted as leaving a window wide open all year long! Go into your attic and measure the insulation level. If you find low insulation levels, get advice on how to insulate and seal your attic for comfort and savings.

Cooking and Baking Efficiency

- Put lids on pots and pans to prevent heat loss.
- Match the pot to the size of the burner to prevent heat from escaping around the sides.
- Use a microwave oven or range top as they use less energy than a conventional oven.
- Use the lowest-possible heat setting to cook foods on top of the range.
- Open the oven door infrequently. Every time you open it, the temperature drops about 25-30 degrees and more energy is used to generate the desired level of heat.

Laundry Efficiency

- Always wash full loads of clothes to maximize water use and savings.
- Using cool settings on your washing machine saves hot water and energy.
- Cleaning out the exhaust vent and lint trap in your dryer can help it to run more efficiently and use less energy.
- Add tennis balls to your dryer to help clothes dry faster and save energy.
- Save using your dryer by hanging laundry out to dry in nicer weather.



Energy and Money Saving Tips for Small Business

- Turn off lights and equipment when not in use.
- Use available sunlight to illuminate your work spaces.
- Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent lamps.
- Install LED (light-emitting diode) "EXIT" signs.
- Install occupancy sensors to automatically turn off lights.
- Regularly change HVAC filters.
- Tune-up your HVAC units (clean and check refrigerant charge).
- Install programmable thermostats.
- Educate and encourage employees to be energy-conscious and to offer ideas about how energy can be saved. Employee buy-in and involvement can make or break your company's efforts to conserve energy and lower your bill.