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Countdown to Cool

Is Your Home Ready for Summer?

Top 5 Ways to Cool Your World with ENERGY STAR

This summer, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is helping consumers count down the ways to stay cool and comfortable while saving energy and money and protecting our environment. The average family spends \$1900 a year on energy bills with nearly half going towards heating and cooling. With a few simple steps, such as seasonal maintenance of properly sized and installed, energy-efficient heating and cooling equipment, along with properly sealed ducts, you can save as much as 20 percent on annual energy costs. Following the recommendations in the 5 Step Countdown will not only save money on energy bills, but also helps reduce the risks of global warming.

Countdown to a cooler planet and a more energy-efficient home with the following recommendations from EPA:

5. Find and seal air leaks that cause drafts and make your cooling system work overtime.

Use ENERGY STAR Home Sealing to improve your home's "envelope" or "shell" — its outer walls, ceiling, windows, and floors. This is often the most cost-effective way to improve your home's energy efficiency and comfort. ENERGY STAR Home Sealing includes: sealing air leaks to stop drafts, adding insulation, and choosing ENERGY STAR qualified windows when replacing windows. Home sealing can help you save up to 10 percent on your energy bills each year. If your attic is accessible and you like home improvement projects, you can Do-It-Yourself with help from our "DIY Guide to ENERGY STAR Home Sealing." The Guide offers step-by-step instructions for sealing common air leaks and adding insulation to the attic. You can also hire a contractor who will use special diagnostic tools to pinpoint and seal the hidden air leaks in your home.

4. Look for the ENERGY STAR when purchasing cooling products for your home.

Products such as room air conditioners and programmable thermostats that display the government's ENERGY STAR label operate more efficiently, which saves energy and helps protect the environment. You can find the ENERGY STAR on products in more than 50 product categories, including lighting, consumer electronics, and appliances. When you choose ENERGY STAR, you get a product that meets strict energy-efficiency criteria set by EPA and the U.S. Department of Energy.

3. Schedule annual, pre-season maintenance checkups with a licensed contractor to ensure your cooling system is operating efficiently and safely.

Dirt and neglect are the leading causes of system failure. Get a cooling system checkup, and afterward be sure to clean or change your system's air filter according to the filter's instructions — generally once a month. Keep it clean to keep it efficient. If your cooling system is more than 12 years old and needs replacing, consider an energy-efficient model. It's important to purchase the correct size cooling system for your home and have it installed properly so your new investment delivers its full energy-performance promise. Properly sized and installed, regularly maintained energy-efficient heating and cooling equipment, along with properly sealed ducts, can save homeowners as much as 20 percent on annual energy costs.

2. Install a programmable thermostat and use your ceiling fans wisely.

*Save energy by taking advantage of periods in the day when your home doesn't need to be kept as cool. A programmable thermostat, set and used properly, can save up to \$150 in energy costs each year. ENERGY STAR qualified ceiling fans can also cut home energy use — turn the thermostat up several degrees while using the fans to deliver the extra cooling comfort. Remember to turn the fan off when you leave the room. A ceiling fan cools **you** — not the room.*

1. Learn what else you can do to make your home more energy-efficient by visiting ENERGY STAR @ home.

The average home can be responsible for twice as many greenhouse gas emissions as the average car. Learning how energy is used in your home is an important step toward cutting energy costs, improving your home's energy

efficiency, and protecting the environment. ENERGY STAR @ home (www.energystar.gov/home) is an interactive tool that takes you on a room-by-room tour and offers energy saving tips and advice for your entire home.

For more ways to help protect the environment from home, please visit www.energystar.gov.