

ENERGY STAR Update

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
June 28, 2013

Cooling Tips for Every Budget

Summer is officially here, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) ENERGY STAR program is announcing its list of top ways to save energy, save money and protect the climate during the warm weather months. The average home's annual energy bill is over \$2,000, with almost half going to cooling and heating costs. By taking a few simple steps, American families can find ways to save energy no matter their budget. Use ENERGY STAR's brand new cooling [infographic](#) and the tips below to lessen your carbon footprint this summer.

Cost

- Program your thermostat to work around your family's summer schedule—set it a few degrees higher when no one is home, so your cooling system isn't cooling an empty house. With proper use, programmable thermostats can save you about \$180 every year in energy costs.
- Check your heating and cooling system's air filter every month. If the filter looks dirty, change it. At a minimum, change the filter every three months. A dirty filter will slow air flow and make the system work harder to keep you cool—wasting energy.
- Run your ceiling fan to create a cool breeze. If you raise your thermostat by only two degrees and use your ceiling fan, you can lower cooling costs by up to 14 percent. Remember that ceiling fans cool you, not the room, so when you leave the room, make sure to turn off the fan.
- Close the curtains and shades before you leave your home to keep the sun's rays from overheating the interior of your home. If you can, move container trees and plants in front of sun-exposed windows to act as shade.

Low-Cost

- Remember to have your heating and cooling system serviced annually to ensure it's running at optimum efficiency for money and energy savings.
- Swap out incandescent bulbs with more energy-efficient lighting choices—ENERGY STAR certified lighting not only uses less energy, it also produces about 75 percent less heat than incandescent lighting, so cooling bills will be reduced too.
- Seal your ducts. As much as 20 percent of the air moving through your home's duct system is lost due to leaks, holes, and poor connections. Seal duct work using mastic sealant or metal tape, and insulate all the ducts that you can access (such as those in attics, crawlspaces, unfinished basements, and garages).
- Make sure connections at vents and registers are well-sealed where they meet your floors, walls, and ceilings. These are common locations to find leaks and disconnected ductwork.

Medium-to-Higher Cost

- When buying a room AC unit, look for one that has earned the ENERGY STAR. If all room air conditioners sold in the United States were ENERGY STAR certified, the energy cost savings would grow to more than \$520 million each year and 7 billion pounds of annual greenhouse gas emissions would be prevented, equivalent to the emissions from more than 670,000 vehicles.
- You can save up to \$200 a year in heating and cooling costs (or 10 percent on your energy bill) by sealing and insulating your home with ENERGY STAR. When correctly installed with air sealing, insulation can deliver comfort and lower energy bills during the hottest and coldest times of the year.
- Hire a contractor to seal and insulate the interior ductwork in your home (the ducts you can't reach yourself). For help with choosing a contractor, go to www.energystar.gov/homeimprovement.
- If your central AC unit is more than 12 years old, replacing it with a model that has earned EPA's ENERGY STAR could cut your cooling costs by 30 percent.

For more information about keeping cool and comfortable while saving money this season, visit www.energystar.gov.

Products, homes, and buildings that earn the ENERGY STAR label prevent greenhouse gas emissions by meeting strict energy efficiency requirements set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In 2012 alone, Americans, with the help of ENERGY STAR, saved \$24 billion on their utility bills and prevented greenhouse gas emissions equal to those of 50 million vehicles. From the first ENERGY STAR qualified computer in 1992, the ENERGY STAR label can now be found on products in more than 65 different categories, with more than 4.5 billion sold over the past 20 years. Over 1.4 million new homes and 20,000 facilities, including offices, schools, hospitals, and industrial plants, have earned the ENERGY STAR. For more information about ENERGY STAR, visit www.energystar.gov or call toll-free 1-888-STAR-YES (1-888-782-7937).

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