



Public Service Commission Chairman Lane's Column



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Easy Ways to Save on Summer Utility Bills

Summer is the time to have fun with family and friends, but this summer is different. There is still plenty of fun to be had, but the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown left many people strapped for cash. Many West Virginians are looking for ideas about how to save money. Lowering your utility bills is a good place to start. The Public Service Commission wants to help, so here are some easy steps that will bring fast results.

A great place to start is by changing your air conditioner filter. When household dust, pollen and pet dander accumulate on the filter, it causes your air conditioner to run longer and work harder. A fresh filter solves that problem right away. Also keep air vents clear of anything that might block air flow.

Did you know that the Energy Star program suggests setting your thermostat at 78 degrees when you are home? Reset it to 85 degrees when you're away from home and 82 degrees overnight, and use fans to circulate the air. A fan lets you to raise the thermostat by four degrees without reducing your comfort level.

The kitchen is a prime place to save energy. Cutting down on kitchen heat is a great excuse to put dinner on the grill. The microwave can also reduce heat in the kitchen. To maximize your refrigerator's efficiency, set the thermostat between 35 and 38 degrees and set the freezer between zero to five degrees.

Of course, we use plenty of water in the summer, whether for watering thirsty plants or entertaining the kids. If you have a pool, ask your sewer utility if it offers a credit for the water used to fill it. Policies vary, but it's worth asking. When you wash the car, use a hose nozzle that shuts off. If you have a sprinkler system, make sure it is in good working order and water in the morning or evening when it is cooler and less water will be lost to evaporation.

Most important of all, check your home for leaks and repair them right away. Look around every faucet and drain and near every appliance that uses water. Even the smallest leak can add up to a big difference in your water bill by the end of the month. I hope these tips save you some money and I wish you a wonderful summer.

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