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Energy Saving Tips

What is the Least Expensive Way to Save Energy?

The most inexpensive way to lower your overall electric bill is to find and seal the cracks and gaps within your residence that allow the interior "conditioned" air to escape to the outside. These gaps occur most often around windows and doors.

An easy way to check for these leaks is to turn on all of the exhaust fans in your home and hold a lit incense stick close to the windows and doors to locate the gap. If the smoke from the incense stick travels horizontally rather than straight up, then you have found a leak. Typically, installing low-cost caulk or replacing deteriorated weather stripping is all that is required and may save you as much as 20 percent of your heating and air conditioning cost.

Also, if you have a fireplace, there will be a damper inside the fireplace that allows you to close the chimney to prevent energy loss. Ensure this damper is closed when the fireplace is not being used or the "conditioned" air will simply escape up the chimney.

Convert to Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs (CFLs)

Each incandescent bulb replaced with a CFL can save \$56 over its lifetime. CFLs have come down

significantly in price and there are now specialty CFLs that allow for dimmers and 3-way lamps. Keep in mind that CFLs do contain a minimal amount of Mercury so they should always be properly recycled. Also, CFLs can take anywhere from 30 seconds to a few minutes to reach their full brightness so they should not be used in locations where instant light is required, such as stairways.

Cash for Clunkers (Appliance Clunkers, that is . . .)

The latest energy savings aspect of the Federal Stimulus Program is rolling out in Arizona on October 15th as the "Cash for Appliances" program. Arizona residents will be able to receive up to a \$200 rebate to replace older model dishwashers, clothes washers, refrigerators and freezers.

There are several things you should keep in mind relative to this program: 1) This only applies to older appliances; 2) The new appliances must qualify for the program (typically this means the appliance must be Energy Star qualified; 3) Other local utility rebates may apply. For instance, SRP is currently offering a \$75 rebate to replace an older clothes washer with a new "qualifying" washer; and 4) Appliance makers are also offering rebates from

\$100 to \$500 on qualifying models.

So, if you have been putting off replacing that older dishwasher, clothes dryer or refrigerator/freezer, it may soon be the time to take action.

When purchasing new appliances, keep in mind that side-by-side refrigerators use more energy than top- or bottom-mounted refrigerators, and that top-loading clothes washers use more energy than front-loading models.

Schedule a Home Energy Audit

A home energy audit can save you money! It provides you with a comprehensive assessment of your home's HVAC and distribution systems; attic ventilation; insulation; water usage; window loads; electrical usage; and major appliances.

It also provides you with recommendations for upgrades and a personalized roadmap for energy savings. An Energy Audit is based on the square footage and age of the home, and will typically cost \$250 for an average 2000 square foot home.

Call our office today at (480) 456-8809 to schedule your energy audit and learn how you can start saving both energy and money now!

Rich Schaefer of AccuPro Inspection Services, LLC has over 35 years of experience in Arizona construction, ten years as a certified home inspector and is also a certified energy auditor. If you would like to know more about energy audits, home inspections, commercial property inspections, construction inspections, mold inspections and testing, or to review past issues of AccuPro Insight, please go to www.AccuProINSPECT.com.
