

Summer Cooling Tips

- Close shades during the day to reduce solar heat gains. Outdoor shading devices such as awnings reduce heat gain through a window by as much as 90 percent while letting light in.
- If you're thinking of planting trees, consider putting them by a window on the sunny side of the house for natural heat-reducing shade. See our Energy Saving Landscaping Guide.
- Leave storm windows on windows that don't need to be opened, or on windows in air conditioned rooms. They help keep the heat outside.
- Use cross ventilation. Put a fan blowing inward in a window on the cool side of the house. This will push out hot air while pulling cool air into the rest of the house.

Air Conditioning

Air conditioning puts a tremendous strain on electrical generating facilities, not to mention your checkbook, so the best advice is to use other methods of keeping yourself and your house cool whenever possible. Here are a few tips to keep your air conditioners energy consumption down when you do use it.

- Set the thermostat at 78° or higher—a reasonably comfortable and energy efficient indoor temperature. A 78° setting will save you about 15 percent or more on cooling costs over a 72° setting.
- Don't set the thermostat at a colder than normal setting. It will not cool the house any faster, but, as with the furnace, will simply overshoot the desired temperature and waste energy.
- Clean or replace filters at least once a month.
- Turn off the air conditioner when you are going to be gone for several hours and draw the shades to keep heat out. It takes less energy to re-cool the house when you return than it does to keep it cool while you are gone.
- Don't place lamps or other heat-generating devices near the thermostat since it could sense this heat and make the air conditioner run longer than needed.
- Room air conditioners should fit snugly to window frames. Close heat ducts in the room and remove or seal up the unit with plastic after the cooling season.
- Have your central air conditioning unit checked and tuned when you have your furnace serviced.
- Periodically clean and vacuum the grills, coils and cooling fins on the outside unit and keep them clear of leaves and other obstructions.