

Maine Public Utilities Commission

NEWS RELEASE

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COOL TIPS FOR HOT TIMES

Maine PUC offers energy-saving tips

Augusta, MAINE -- Hot weather's on its way to New England, and that's a boon for boaters, beachgoers, and everyone else who loves summer in Maine. But as temperatures rise, so does the demand for electricity - and energy bills are rising too.

It doesn't have to be that way. As Maine citizens and businesses grow more active in energy conservation, the Maine Public Utilities Commission's Efficiency Maine program wants them to know that efficiency is easy.

"Maine's leaders have made it a priority to reduce energy use -- and the pollution it can cause," says Kurt Adams, the Commission's chairman. "That makes sense for the planet and for the pocketbook."

Here are some examples from Efficiency Maine of what you can do NOW to cool off, lower your bills, and stem the tide of pollutants that can contribute to climate change. More tips and information are on the web at www.energymaine.com:

- Turn off unused equipment. The average home consumes 50 watts of power annually on devices such as battery chargers, entertainment centers, and computers that are not even in use. Plug them all into a single power strip and turn the whole strip off. That can save the average home in Maine \$65 a year.
- Use compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) for lighting. They use two-thirds less electricity than other bulbs, paying for their slightly higher cost within a few months. CFLs last up to ten years and give off far less heat than older light bulbs!
- Seek out cash incentives from the commission's Efficiency Maine program for homeowners, renters and business owners who install efficient equipment. Visit www.energymaine.com to find out more.
- Small businesses can save a bundle by keeping a sharp eye on the thermostat. Every degree lower than 78 degrees adds about 8 percent to air conditioning costs. Ask your HVAC experts about installing an economizer - which brings in fresh air when it's cooled down outside.

- At dinner time use an exhaust fan to blow hot kitchen air outside; that's much cheaper than using an air conditioner to cool the air down. And efficiency is a good excuse to get out of the kitchen and grill outdoors (with efficient fuels like propane).
- Turn off the air conditioner, and pull the shades. Use ceiling fans to circulate the air. Set them spinning counterclockwise (downwards) to be most effective. Use window fans to draw in cool air at night.
- When you do use an air conditioner, make sure it's the right size for the space: too big and it will waste electricity by cycling on and off more frequently. Install it away from direct sunlight, which heats the air conditioner and hurts efficiency. Keep lights and TVs away from the unit too.
- Look for the Energy Star® label when buying any appliance - it's a guarantee that the product exceeds federal efficiency minimums. Energy Star® products can help you cut your energy bills by a third.

“When the weather turns hot, it’s important to reduce electricity consumption and help to prevent overloads on the region’s electric system,” Chairman Adams says. “If we each pay attention, we can save money and reduce pollution too.”

The Maine PUC’s “Summer Energy Efficiency Tips” for homes and small businesses is available online at www.energymaine.com. To arrange an interview with Commission Chairman Kurt Adams, call Fred Bever at 287-8519.

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