

Maine Public Utilities Commission

NEWS RELEASE

MAINERS CAN SAVE ENERGY AND STILL BEAT THE HEAT

Efficiency Maine offers energy-saving tips

Augusta, MAINE -- Hot weather's made an early appearance in New England, and as Mainers get ready for the summer the PUC's Efficiency Maine team has a few tips that can help keep temperatures down at your home or business without running electricity bills sky high.

"We can take action this summer to reduce electricity use and still stay cool," said PUC Chairman Sharon M. Reishus. "Avoiding unnecessary electricity use helps the environment too, by reducing power plant emissions of carbon-dioxide and other pollutants that contribute to climate change and create health problems."

Here are some examples from 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:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- For a host of energy savings strategies in the home, visit www.carbonfreehomes.org. You can sign up there for a chance to win \$1,000 toward an Energy Star® appliance!

"When the weather turns hot, reducing electricity consumption helps to prevent overloads on the region's electric system," Chairman Reishus said. "Saving energy wherever we can makes sense for both our pocketbooks and the environment."

More information is available online at www.energymaine.com and at www.carbonfreehomes.org. To arrange an interview with Commission Chairman Sharon Reishus or experts on the Efficiency Maine team, call Fred Bever at 287-6141.

#####

Maine Public Utilities Commission

242 State Street

Augusta, Maine 04333-0018

Website: <http://www.maine.gov/mpuc/>, Email: maine.puc@maine.gov

CONTACT: Fred Bever 207-287-6141, 207-318-9093 (cell)

fred.bever@maine.gov
