

JAMUP

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Energy efficiency ideas to help on your winter heating bill



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Director of
Member Services

As you read this article, I assume the cold of winter is the furthest thing from your mind. Now is the time to prepare for those frosty temperatures. Do not wait until you

receive your first winter electric bill to think about energy efficiency improvements to your home. Here are a few steps to take to lower your energy usage.

- 1. Keep the cold air out and the warm air in.** Caulk and weatherstrip around windows and doors to eliminate air leaks. Seal gaps in floors, walls, around pipes, and electrical wiring. Install gaskets behind outlet covers and make sure you have enough insulation in your attic. For those of you residing in a mobile home adding underpinning or repairing gaping holes or tears in existing metal is quite beneficial.
- 2. Check or replace your HVAC system.** Change your filters regularly. When you install new filters, make sure they are facing in the correct direction. Fix broken ducts by replacing cracked or peeling tape for a tight seal. If your heating system is over fifteen years old consider a replacement unit. The federal government currently allows for a 30 percent federal tax credit for geothermal heat pump installation, but the offer expires on December 31, 2016.

3. Install a programmable thermostat.

Setting a thermostat a few degrees lower at nighttime, and making proper thermostat adjustments while you're away from home for long periods of time, can significantly lower your electric bill. Every degree you lower can take up to two percent off your bill. Smart thermostats can now be accessed over the internet.

4. Make minor lifestyle changes.

During the day, let the sunshine in. Open your shades and drapes and let the sun heat your home. When the sun sets close them to retain the heat. Turn off lights and electronics in rooms you are not using. Unplug that spare refrigerator in your garage that has nothing in it. Visit our website www.siec.coop and sign up for SmartHub to view your daily usage

5. Minimize the usage of electric space heaters.

First of all, there is no miracle heater. Most electric space heaters are 1,500 watts. They will produce the same amount of heat as any other 1,500-watt space heater regardless of the price you paid. They produce enough energy to warm a small room in your house. Below is an approximate breakdown of energy charges if the heater runs 24 hours a day in a 30-day billing cycle.

1,500 watts x 24 hours = 36,000
watts/1000 = 36 kilowatt-hours (kWh)
36 kWh x 30 days = 1,080 kWh x
\$.115 average cost per kWh = \$124.20

Making smart choices in your energy usage can make a big difference in your electric bill. **Roger Jackson**



WHAT WILL I NEED TO WEATHER STRIP DOORS AND WINDOWS?

There are a variety of materials available to weather strip your home. Here are a few options to help you choose:

*Apply weather stripping around the door frame and stop. At the bottom of a door, install a door sweep, door shoe or threshold; or apply reinforced-foam weather stripping. Apply weather stripping at the top and bottom of window sash.

FELT

Reinforced with a flexible metal strip. Should be stapled, glued or tacked into place.

Cost: Low

Advantages: Easy to install and inexpensive.

Disadvantages: Low durability. Do not use where exposed to a great deal of moisture. All-wool felt is more durable but very visible.

ROLLED OR REINFORCED VINYL

Pliable or rigid strip gasket (attached to wood or metal strips).

Cost: Low to moderate.

Advantages: Easy installation, various colors to help with visibility and some types of rigid strip gaskets provide slot holes for height adjustment.

Disadvantages: Very visible.

REINFORCED FOAM

Closed-cell foam attached to wood or metal strips.

Cost: Moderately low

Advantages: Effective sealer, rigid, proven to work well.

Disadvantages: Very visible.

Source: Department of Energy

*For more weather stripping options, visit <http://energy.gov/energysaver/articles/weatherstripping>

Electrical safety lessons for kids

We all know electricity plays a major role in our everyday lives, and it is a powerful resource that should be respected. Unfortunately, our children often do not understand the dangers of electricity. At Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative (SIEC), we encourage you to share electrical safety tips and lessons with your little ones as often as possible. We also understand their attention spans run short, so here are a few creative ways to get them involved.

Depending on the age of your child, consider designating an “electronics deputy.” The deputy should be responsible for pointing out electronics in your home that are not in use and keeping appliances safe from liquids. Reward your deputy for pointing out overloaded outlets or other potentially dangerous situations.

Emphasize the importance of fire prevention with your children, and create a family fire drill plan as an extra precaution. Incentivize your children by rewarding those who followed the plan and made it safely out of the home.

While it is fun and engaging to turn safety into a game, it is important to ensure your children understand the

risks they are facing if they do not practice electrical safety.

One of the most important safety tips you can give your kids is to avoid any downed power lines. In fact, it is best to avoid power lines, transformers and substations in general. A downed power line can still be energized, and it can also energize other objects, including fences and trees. Make sure your kids understand the potential dangers of coming in contact with a downed power line or low hanging wire. And, if they encounter a downed power line, ask them to tell you or another adult to call SIEC at 1-800-762-1400.

Here are a few other safety tips you can share with your kids:

- Never put metal objects in outlets or appliances.
- Do not overcrowd electrical outlets. **Janet Casper**
- Never mix water and electricity.

No matter how you choose to get your kids interested in staying safe around electricity, SIEC is here to help. To learn more about electrical safety, visit <http://www.siec.coop>.

Meghaan Evans writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

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For Outages Call:
800-762-1400 * 618-827-3555



Member prize

In this issue of the JAMUP, we printed the names of three SIEC members who are eligible to receive a \$10 credit toward their utility bill. If you find your name printed in this center section and it's not part of the story, call Bree with your account number at **800-762-1400** to claim your prize.

Stay focused on safety during harvest

During harvest season, many farmers reap the benefits of advancement in agricultural technology. With the help of GPS auto-steer devices, farmers are able to decrease driver error and maximize productivity. Yet despite these advances, safety risks remain. To help farmers stay out of harm's way, Safe Electricity shares tips for a safe harvest.

GPS with auto-guidance provides farmers with real-time location data about a field, which can be used for crop planning, map making, navigation assistance and machinery guidance. During harvest, this technology allows drivers to have their hands off the steering wheel as the combine maneuvers itself through the field. Thanks to this technology, farmers can more easily and efficiently maintain accuracy even during low-light conditions, which enhances productivity.

"One critical part of safety around electricity is awareness," explains Kyla Kruse, communications director of the Safe Electricity program. "It's important to remember that farm machinery is vulnerable to hitting power lines because of its large size, height and extensions. Being aware of the location of overhead power lines and planning a safe equipment route can help reduce accidents."

In equipment with auto-guidance systems, less focus is needed on steering, which may lead some drivers to think that they do not need to be as aware of navigation issues. However, even while using a GPS with auto-steering, farm workers need to keep safety in mind and stay focused on their surroundings.

Putting safety first requires alertness, focus and knowledge of potential hazards and safety steps. Varying pass-to-pass accuracy levels and potential issues, such as power poles not being correctly plotted in the system, reinforce the need for drivers to stay focused on the location of the farm equipment while in the field and to be ready to take action if necessary.

Regardless the technology used on the farm, keep the following electrical safety guidelines in mind:



- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from power lines—at all times, in all directions.
- Look up and use care when moving any equipment such as extending augers or raising the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always set extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads to prevent contact with overhead power lines. Grain augers should always be positioned horizontally before being moved.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, contact Southern Illinois Electric

Cooperative at 1-800-762-1400. If your equipment does make contact with a power line, do not leave the cab. Immediately call 911, warn others to stay away and wait for the utility crew to cut the power.

The only reason to exit equipment that has come into contact with overhead lines is if the equipment is on fire, which is rare. However, if this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the ground and machinery at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

For more information on electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

The Energy Education Council is a non-profit membership organization providing consumer safety and energy efficiency materials to more than 400 co-ops.

Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative

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ENERGY VAMPIRES ARE LURKING IN YOUR HOME



Save energy in your home by locating energy vampires!
These are the electronics and appliances that consume energy even when they are not being used. *Circle the energy vampires below, and use the key to check your answers.*



OVEN



CELL PHONE CHARGER



CABLE/SET TOP BOX



LAPTOP CHARGER



DISHWASHER



LAMP



Answer Key:
Cell phone charger, Laptop charger, Cable box