



**Alex Hansen**  
Marketing &  
Communications  
Manager

## Summer energy savings tips

**A**s temperatures rise across southern Illinois, so can the amount of electricity we use to keep our homes comfortable. During the summer months, air conditioning is one of the largest contributors to higher electric bills. At SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative, we are committed to helping our members use energy more efficiently while keeping your homes comfortable year-round. As temperatures begin to warm, there are several simple steps members can take to stay comfortable while lowering energy use and saving money this summer.

One of the easiest ways to reduce energy consumption is to adjust your thermostat settings. Setting your thermostat a few degrees higher can make a noticeable difference on your monthly bill. Ceiling fans can also help circulate cool air and allow you to raise the thermostat without sacrificing comfort. During warmer months, make sure your ceiling fan blades are set to rotate counterclockwise, creating a downward breeze that makes you feel cooler.

Early summer is a good time to check air filters and have your cooling system inspected. Dirty filters and poorly maintained equipment can reduce efficiency and increase energy usage. Replacing filters regularly is a low-cost way to help your system operate more efficiently. A well-maintained unit uses less energy, lasts longer, and helps prevent costly breakdowns when you need it most.

Another important step is making sure your home is properly sealed and insulated. Small gaps around windows and doors can allow cool air to escape and warm air to enter, forcing your air conditioner to work harder. Simple improvements like weather stripping, sealing leaks and closing curtains and blinds during the day can help keep your home cooler and reduce strain on your cooling system.

The time of day you use energy can also play a part in savings. Running dishwashers, washing machines and dryers during the cooler morning or evening hours can help reduce heat inside the home and lower overall demand on the electric grid during peak usage times. Ovens and stovetops are big contributors to increasing indoor temperatures; therefore, if you are able, we recommend grilling to keep the heat outside.

This summer will mark the beginning of peak events for members participating in our Peak Power Rewards program. As electricity demand increases during the hottest/ coldest days of the year, peak events may begin being called as early as July. During these events, participating members are encouraged to temporarily reduce their energy usage during designated time periods. By participating, members can earn credits on their electric bill while also helping reduce strain on the electric grid during times of highest demand.

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READERSHIP  
PRIZE WINNER:  
Chris L Niebrugge,  
Goreville, IL

# Smart home, smart savings

## Easy tech upgrades to lower energy bills

**W**ant to lower your energy bills without giving up comfort? A few smart home devices can help you use energy more efficiently.

From smart thermostats to lighting controlled with your phone, smart homes include a range of connected devices that can automate tasks, provide real-time data and even save you money. While some devices are all about efficiency, others are simply convenient or add a high-tech touch to your home.

Smart home technology includes connected devices that automate tasks and provide energy-use data. You don't need a fully connected system to see benefits. Many affordable, stand-alone options can help you cut waste and manage costs without sacrificing comfort.

### ■ Smart thermostats:

These devices can reduce heating and cooling use when used consistently. With an estimated

energy bill savings of 10%, this smart device could pay for itself in just a year or two. (Actual savings depend on prior heating and cooling habits and how it's used after installation.) Check with your utility for available rebates and programs.

■ **Smart plugs:** Plug in a device to track energy use and turn it on or off remotely. They are a low-cost way to identify energy drains. You may decide cooling a case of soda in that old garage refrigerator isn't worth it after all.

■ **Energy monitors:** These devices provide real-time feedback on electricity use (kind of like a fitness tracker for your home). Depending on the changes you make after reviewing their data, you could save 10-20% on your energy bill.



■ **Smart lighting:** Use schedules, dimming and motion settings to reduce lighting waste. Smart LED bulbs also let you control lights remotely, which can help if lights are often left on.

Note that some smart devices rely on electricity and Wi-Fi, so features may not work during a power outage. It might be worth considering a backup generator or battery storage system for peace of mind.

Whether you start with one device or several, smart tech can help reduce energy waste, save money and make daily routines easier. Get more energy efficiency tips at [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

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Peak Power Rewards helps members take a more active role in managing their energy use while creating opportunities to save money. If you have not yet enrolled, we encourage you to learn more and sign up by visiting [SEIEC.com/peakpower](http://SEIEC.com/peakpower).

Your Cooperative is committed to helping our members manage energy use while continuing to provide reliable and affordable power. We encourage members to visit our website for additional energy-saving tips and resources throughout the summer season.

See you next month, and as always, "We'll keep the lights on for you."

CHECK OUT OUR NEW SMALL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT ON PAGE 6!

SEIEC SMALL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

POWERING LOCAL BUSINESS

APPLY TODAY

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
618-273-2611 EXT. 160



# Welcome home: Electrical safety for new homeowners

## A new homeowner's electrical safety checklist

**M**oving into a new house is an exciting time. From unpacking boxes to decorating, there's a lot to do. During this busy time, don't overlook a vital aspect of your new home: its electrical system.

### Get to know your electrical panel

Knowing your breaker box means understanding its parts, like the main breaker for the whole house, individual switches for circuit breakers and their functions.

- Familiarize yourself with your electrical panel and label each breaker and panel by appliance or room.
- Test how to reset a tripped breaker.
- Find the main shut-off switch in case of an emergency.

### Avoid electrical hazards

Knowing what to look for around your home and identifying potential hazards can ensure your family's safety, prevent fires and reduce costly repairs.

- Have only one heat-producing appliance, such as a coffee maker, microwave or space heater, plugged into an outlet at a time.
- Major appliances (refrigerators, dryers, washers, stoves) should be plugged directly into a wall receptacle outlet. Extensions cords and outlet strips should not be used.
- Inspect cords for signs of fraying or damage and replace or repair them immediately.
- Only use extension cords temporarily. Don't run cords under rugs, carpets, doorways or windows. Have a qualified electrician add more outlets if needed.
- Use surge protectors to safeguard devices such as computers, televisions and appliances from sudden power spikes.
- Always keep electrical devices away from water sources such as sinks, tubs and pools. Unplug items like hair dryers after use.

- Reduce risk of shock by using ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) around water sources such as kitchens, bathrooms, garages, basements and outdoors.
- Use outlet covers to prevent children (and pets) from inserting objects into unused outlets.
- Use light bulbs with the correct wattage — lamps and fixtures have a sticker to indicate the maximum wattage.
- Have a working smoke and carbon monoxide detector on every floor of your home and ensure there are units installed near your sleeping area.
- Keep outdoor ladders away from overhead power lines, including the electrical service into your home.
- Schedule an electrical inspection with a qualified electrician for peace of mind and to catch issues early.
- Call a professional if you notice these signs of an electrical problem:
  - Frequently blown fuses, tripped circuit breakers and unexplained power outages.
  - A tingling feeling when touching an appliance.
  - Discolored or warm outlets or switch plates.
  - A burning or rubbery smell, or a buzzing or sizzling sound.
  - Flickering or dimming lights.
  - Sparks from an outlet.

As you settle in, keep electrical safety on your new-home checklist. Pair these habits with energy-smart steps like turning off lights and unplugging unused devices, and you'll reduce risk while lowering your utility bill. The little choices you make every day add up to a safer, more efficient household. Welcome home.



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

During these warm summer months, a smart thermostat can help keep your home comfortable while reducing cooling costs. Smart thermostats learn your routine and automatically raise the temperature when you're away and cool things down before you return, avoiding unnecessary energy use. You can also adjust settings remotely from your phone, so you're never cooling an empty house. Setting your thermostat a few degrees higher while you're away or asleep can lead to significant savings. Many smart thermostats provide reports and tips, helping you fine-tune your energy use and stay cool while keeping your electric bill in check.



# POWER OUTAGE

## If your power goes off, we offer these suggestions

1. Check the fuses or circuit breakers in your service panels. If you have breakers, make sure they are in the "ON" position.
2. If you have a meter pole, check the main breaker panel just below the meter socket. If the breaker is in the "OFF" position, check all of your wiring from the meter pole to your various buildings. If the wiring appears to be okay, reset the breaker to the "ON" position.
3. If you still do not have power, check with neighbors to see if they have power.
4. To report a power failure or other emergency, please phone 1-877-399-8405. This phone number is monitored around the clock, 365 days per year to accept your outage and emergency calls.
5. Your phone call will be handled by SouthEastern's automated outage reporting system and will be identified automatically through ANI (Automatic Number Identification). An outage record will then be generated for your location. Please note that the phone number

from which you place the call will be the number used to generate the record. If the system fails to recognize your phone number, members having touch-tone phones may simply enter their seven-digit phone number (without area code) in order to report the outage. Members not having touch-tone phones will be asked to leave a message. It is important you leave your name, phone number and location of the outage. Retrieving messages and entering them into the system is time consuming; therefore, please leave only a message that will help in restoration of electric service. Do not remain on the line for an operator because a live operator is not there to respond. In order to keep a current listing of all numbers, it is important that you notify the Cooperative of any changes in your telephone number.

6. Handling outage calls electronically allows you to report power failures very quickly. Once your outage has been reported, it will be dispatched to repair personnel who will restore your outage as soon as possible. Calling back repeatedly will not shorten the length of the outage, but may hinder the efforts of other members who are trying to report outages.

**OUTAGE CALLS ONLY 1-877-399-8405**

**SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

100 Cooperative Way • Carrier Mills, IL 62917-2275  
618-273-2611 or 800-833-2611 • Office hours: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. M-F

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