Pitt and Greene
Electric Membership Corporation
"Where Customers Have A Choice"
Member Newsletter
February 2018

Start saving with a *Do It Yourself* home energy audit

Armed with some basic knowledge and a little time, you can conduct a baseline energy audit of your home to identify where you are losing energy (and money). Use a checklist and take notes on problems you find as you walk through your home. Remember, the audit itself won't save you money unless you act on your findings.

DIY 101

So, where to start? If your home has multiple levels, work from the top down. Begin in your attic or highest floor, and work your way down to the first floor or basement.

1. Insulation and air leaks (drafts) – According to the Department of Energy, improving your home's insulation and sealing air leaks are the fastest and most cost-effective ways to reduce energy waste and make the most of your energy dollars. Check to see whether there is sufficient insulation in the attic. Are openings containing piping, ductwork and chimney sealed?
2. Electronic devices – Inventory all of the electronic devices you have and how often you use them. Computers, printers, DVD players, phones and gaming consoles are notorious "vampire power" users – they drain energy even when not in use. If items can be turned off without disrupting your lifestyle, consider plugging them into a power strip that can be turned on and off (or put on a timer).
3. Lighting – Note where you still have incandescent lights. Can you replace them with CFL or LED upgrades? Do you have nightlights? If so, consider replacing them with LED nightlights. Are there places where you can install motion sensor lights in low use areas, such as a closet, porch or garage?
4. Thermostat/indoor temperature – Do you have a programmable thermostat? When was the last time it was programmed? Is the date and time correct? If they are not, this could throw off the automatic settings. Is it set so the temperature is lower during the day and/or times when no one is home and at night when people are sleeping? Consider lowering the temperature a few degrees.
5. Appliances and cleaning – Appliances are large energy users, and if yours are more than 10 years old, they are likely not as energy efficient as today's options. How and when you use them also make a difference. Do you wash your clothes in hot water, or can you use cold water instead? Do you use your washer, dryer or dishwasher during the day? Consider running them at night, during off-peak times. Does your hot water heater have a blanket? If not, consider insulating it. Make sure your dryer vent isn't blocked – this will not only save energy, it may also prevent a fire.

Evaluation

Once you have completed the audit, take a look at the findings. Prioritize actions that you can take based on your time and budget, weighing where you can get the most impact for your investment. Increasing your home's energy efficiency will make your family comfortable while saving you money.

Daylight Savings Time is Sunday, March 11th. Remember to move your clocks ahead 1 hour.

Manager's Message

By: Mark A. Suggs

Electric Bills Affected By Weather Patterns

Electric bills vary with the seasons, driven by weather and consumer use patterns.

Weather matters. When it's cool outdoors, family members generally want the house warm. When it's warm outside, air conditioners make living areas pleasant.

How much weather affects your electric bills depends on many factors, including your home's original construction materials, insulation, and air leaks. Personal comfort plays a role too, as does the difference between the thermostat setting inside and temperatures outdoors.

When a house stays at 68 degrees Fahrenheit, but the outdoor temperature varies from being in the 30s in winter to more than 100 degrees on a muggy summer's day, demand for heating and cooling can be significant. Cooled air leaving a home essentially wastes the money spent to cool it. The same is true for air a homeowner has paid to warm.

R-value offers a way of measuring insulation's effectiveness (a higher R-value indicates more effective insulation). For example, on a 28-degree day, heat loss from a residence set at 68 degrees could hit 2,464 Btu per hour even through an 8 ft. x 10 ft. exterior wall packed with R-13 insulation. Reverse that situation on a scorching day—100 degrees outside—and heat gain indoors will still reach 2,464 BTU per hour.

To save money, set your thermostat five degrees closer (higher in summer, lower in winter) to the outdoor temperature, this simple change could result in a savings of 90 watts per hour of electricity, about 197 kilowatt-hours (kWh) in three months.

Keep blinds and drapes on the sunny side of your home closed in summer and open in winter. Find mysteriously "hot" or "cold" spots in the house and solve them by installing gasket seals around outlets and weather stripping along doors and windows, replacing old windows, and upgrading insulation. When practical, adjust landscaping to provide shade for your property in summer and sunlight in winter.

Weather doesn't have to play havoc with electricity bills. There are a variety of tools, appliances, and resources available to solve all sorts of energy challenges. Improvements such as new windows or a roof, require significant financing. But there are a lot of options that are inexpensive and simple enough to do yourself. Find more ways to save at www.TogetherWeSave.com.

WHAT TO DO: IF YOUR CAR CRASHES INTO A UTILITY POLE

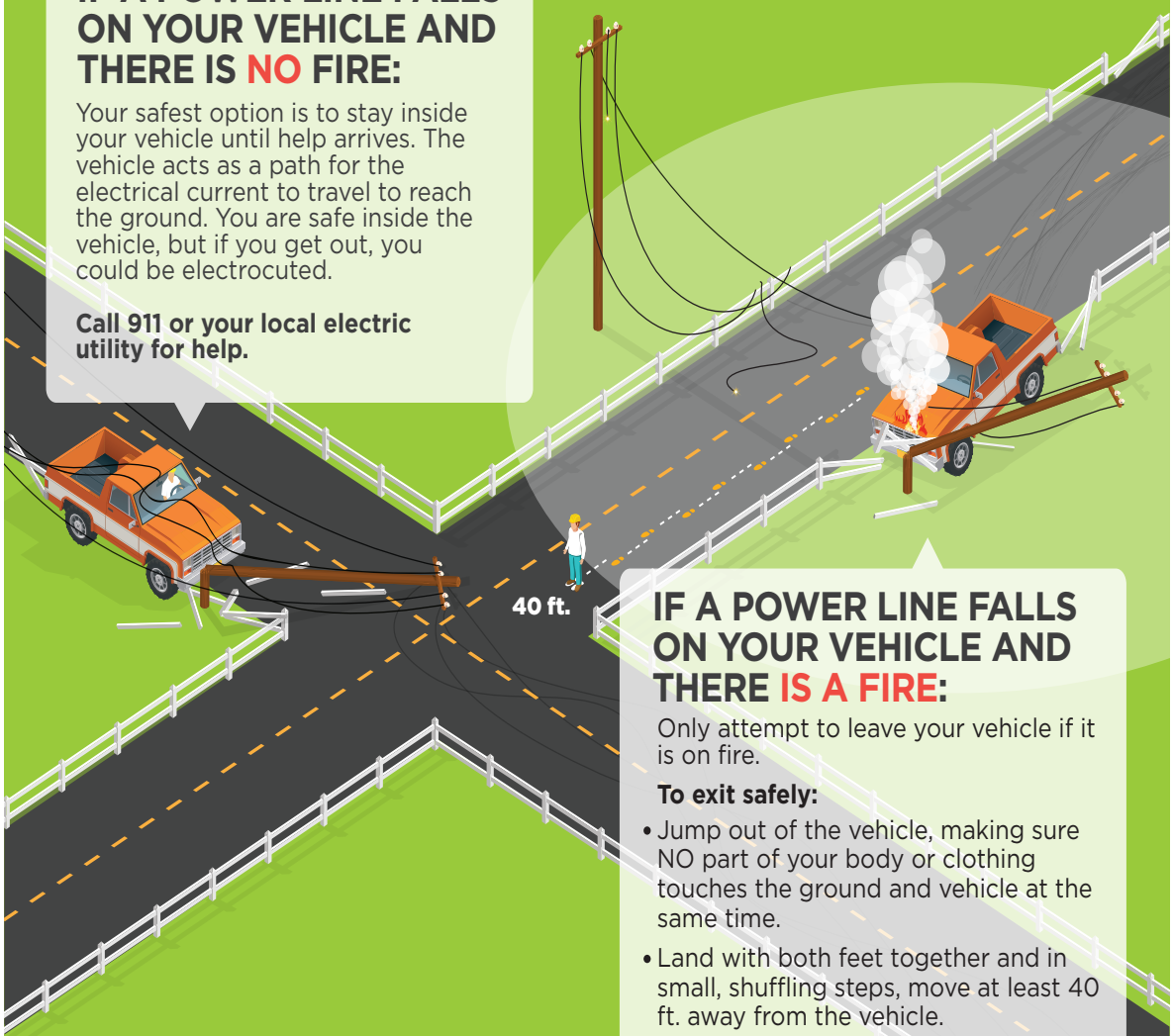
Accidents happen. Would you know what to do if your car crashed into an electric utility pole? Knowing what to do could be the difference between life and death.

Always consider power lines and other electrical equipment to be live and dangerous!

IF A POWER LINE FALLS ON YOUR VEHICLE AND THERE IS NO FIRE:

Your safest option is to stay inside your vehicle until help arrives. The vehicle acts as a path for the electrical current to travel to reach the ground. You are safe inside the vehicle, but if you get out, you could be electrocuted.

Call 911 or your local electric utility for help.



IF A POWER LINE FALLS ON YOUR VEHICLE AND THERE IS A FIRE:

Only attempt to leave your vehicle if it is on fire.

To exit safely:

- Jump out of the vehicle, making sure NO part of your body or clothing touches the ground and vehicle at the same time.
- Land with both feet together and in small, shuffling steps, move at least 40 ft. away from the vehicle.
- The ground could be energized. Shuffling away with both feet together decreases the risk of electrical shock.

Call 911 or your local electric utility for help.

AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

Programmable Thermostats offer Potential Savings

Keeping your home hot or cold—depending on the season—accounts for a big chunk of your annual budget. Not surprisingly, savings can add up in a hurry when heating and cooling systems are tweaked for maximum efficiency. You can easily trim your energy bills in winter by setting the thermostat at 68°F while you're awake and back a few degrees when to go to sleep or are away from home.

Even better, turning your thermostat back 10° to 15° for eight hours can save about 5 percent to 15 percent a year on your heating bill—about 1 percent for each degree.

The location of your thermostat can greatly affect its performance and efficiency. Place thermostats away from direct sunlight, drafts, doorways, skylights, and windows.

Installing a programmable thermostat can take the thought out of saving energy. Your heating and cooling system will ramp up or switch off according to a preset time of day or even day of the week. Most models let you manually override the schedule without affecting the rest of the daily or weekly program.

Programmable thermostats are generally not recommended for heat pumps. In cooling mode, a heat pump operates like an air conditioner, so turning up the thermostat will save energy and money. But when a heat pump works in its heating mode, setting back the thermostat can cause the unit to operate inefficiently, thereby canceling out any savings achieved by lowering the temperature. Maintaining a moderate setting is the most cost-effective practice.

To automatically manage electric resistance systems, such as electric baseboard heating, steam heating, or radiant floor heating, you will need to purchase a programmable thermostat specifically designed for the task. Of course, when shopping for a programmable thermostat, always look for the ENERGY STAR® label. More information on what may be right for your home can be found at energystar.gov.

Do you need to update your contact information? If you have a new telephone number or need to add a secondary contact to your account, please call Pitt & Greene EMC at 252-753-3128.

Energy Efficiency
Tip of the Month

Consider insulating your hot water pipes. Doing so can reduce heat loss, allow you to lower the temperature setting and save an additional 3 to 4 percent per year on water heating.

Source: energy.gov

De lunes a viernes de 8:00 a.m. a 5:00 p.m
252-753-3128 / 1-800-622-1362 / 252-747-7600

CORTES DE SUMINISTRO ELÉCTRICO Y EMERGENCIAS:
Durante fines de semana, días festivos y después del horario de oficina
252-753-8778

Co-op Office Hours
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