



Pitt and Greene

Electric Membership Corporation

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

“Where Customers Have A Choice”

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Member Newsletter

Not all air filters are created equal

Forced air heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) systems require effective air filtration for optimum energy efficiency, maintaining clean(ish) ductwork and good indoor air quality. Air filters should be changed regularly. How often they need changing depends upon a number of factors including, but not limited to:

- Presence of pets that shed
- Amount of carpeted versus hardwood floors
- Where you live – amounts of dust, pollen, etc.
- Use of wood-burning supplemental heat sources
- Presence of cigarette smoke

The air inside our homes is full of particles originating from inside and outside sources. As the name “forced air” implies, conditioned air is blown into the house through ductwork. In order to operate efficiently, the air supplied is returned to the system for reconditioning, taking with it all the particles in the air and the occasional “tumbleweed” of pet hair that many of us are familiar with.

This junk-laden air flows through a filter before encountering the HVAC equipment. For cooling, there is usually an A-frame arrangement of what looks like car radiators. For heating, it is generally a combustion chamber. Without a filter, the cooling coils would get clogged and the heating side would burn off whatever was in the air. Air filters trap a lot of debris that otherwise would end up back in the house, stuck in ductwork, clogging HVAC equipment – or in our lungs.

There are many options available when looking for filters. Fortunately, they can be broken down into two nicely defined categories, making the selection process manageable. The two are:

- Permanent or disposable
- Flat or pleated media (with a handy MERV rating)

Disposable are the most prevalent. Some in the flat media group look like they will stop only particles larger than a golf ball. They have flimsy cardboard frames and a thin, flat mesh you can easily see through. While they are cheap, don't waste your money. Your HVAC system and lungs deserve better.

Pleated filters perform better using media you cannot see through. While they look impervious, air can move through under pressure leaving its airborne cargo trapped.

MERV is the rating system that tells you how effective a filter is at trapping particles. Standing for Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value, it's a measure of efficiency. The scale runs from one to 16 (higher is better) and is based on trapping particles 3-10 microns in diameter. Research shows that residential filters with a MERV rating between seven and 13 are likely to be as effective as true HEPA (high-efficiency particulate arrestance) filters. This class of filter is used in clean room manufacturing and at the extreme end can trap particles much smaller than the diameter of a human hair, as small as 1 micron.

So, should you jump in and grab a supply of high MERV filters? Not without some research. All

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Manager's Message

By: Mark A. Suggs

What would life be like without electric co-ops?

In the holiday movie classic, "It's a Wonderful Life" the lead character, George Bailey (played by Jimmy Stewart), wishes he had never been born due to financial troubles he is experiencing. Through the help of an Angel, he sees how many lives would have been negatively affected if he didn't exist. George comes to realize that, even with his problems, he has a wonderful life with great friends and family.

So what do you think life would be like if community leaders had not founded Pitt & Greene EMC on June 8, 1937?

It is nearly impossible for us to imagine life without electricity. So many of our modern conveniences that improve the quality of our lives are dependent on electricity as the "fuel" to make them work. From the alarm clock that wakes us up, to the refrigerator that keeps our morning milk cold and fresh. From the HVAC unit that keeps us cool in the summer and warm in the winter, to the vacuum that lets us clean more efficiently and all those kitchen appliances that save us time and physical energy. Of course, so much of our entertainment, whether it comes from the TV, radio or computer, depends on the kilowatt-hours that your electric co-op provides. Just think, there would be no smartphones or cell phones if there were no electricity.

Businesses of all kinds rely on electricity to produce and sell the products we need. So, it is no wonder that many electric co-ops feel that, while our primary product is electricity, we are really in the quality of life business.

As we celebrate the season that reminds us to be thankful for all that we have, it is important to remember the 1.3 billion people in the world that still live without reliable electric service. That is equal to about four times the U.S. population!

Many of the things we take for granted living in the U.S. are much harder and more time consuming for people in developing countries around the world. We are proud members of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) that is working through their affiliate, NRECA International, and the NRECA International Foundation to help bring power to people in developing countries like Haiti and Liberia.

We are thankful that our community ancestors had the vision and foresight to do what needed to be done, gathering friends and neighbors to form the electric co-op. As the electric business of the 21st century continues to evolve, you can count on Pitt & Greene EMC to meet all of your electric energy needs. More importantly, we are here to help improve the quality of your life.

The dreaded vampire loads

Perhaps you are familiar with an undesirable aspect of the electronic and IOT (Internet of Things) revolution: vampire loads. Vampire loads come from devices that use electricity even when they appear to be off. The primary culprits are chargers, set-top television boxes, instant-on televisions and gaming systems. There are others, but these four represent the major offenders.

Let's look at how these vampire loads occur and why they are approaching 10 percent of average household electric use according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Chargers take the 120 VAC (volts alternating current) power at the outlet and reduce it down to the voltage required by the connected device, usually 5 to 12 VDC (volts direct current). Obviously, when your device is charging, the charger is using electricity, but you might be surprised to learn that chargers are still using small amounts of energy even when they're not connected to a device.

Television set-top boxes also consume energy when they appear to be inactive. Anytime the set-top box's lights are on, it is using power. Like chargers, they use more when the television is on, but they are always working – even when the TV is off. This is especially true for those devices with a DVR function that records your favorite TV shows.

The instant-on television is another culprit. The intention of the “instant-on” feature is instant gratification for the viewer, meaning no waiting for the TV to turn on and warm up. Unfortunately, for that convenience, the TV must be on at nearly full power. So, in this mode, it can be a real energy drain.

The typical gaming console can use as much energy as a regular refrigerator even when it's not being used. Make sure to check the console settings and disable automatic updates, which is where the energy drain comes from. Games on the console are frequently updated, which requires a lot of electricity.

So how does the average family combat these dreaded vampire loads? You just need to change how you handle these energy-sucking electronics. Here are a few suggestions.

- Unplug chargers when not in use.
- Invest in smart power strips. These look like normal power strips but have a twist; one of the outlets is the “master” that receives power all the time. The others are off. When the device connected to the master outlet turns on, the rest of the outlets receive power too. Ingenious and perfect for entertainment set ups. Have the television in the master outlet and when you turn it on, the set-top box, speakers, streaming devices, etc. will turn on too. They are also ideal for PCs and their peripherals.
- Turn off the instant-on function on your TV. Turn off set-top boxes that do not contain the DVR functionality or use a smart power strip.
- Disable automatic updates in gaming consoles and turn the console completely off when you finish using it.
- When replacing any device or appliance, look for an EnergyStar rated product.

Vampire loads are a real problem that will only continue to grow as the digital age advances. But you can fight the vampires with vigilance and application of the recommendations above.

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filters increase resistance to air flow. HVAC systems are designed to operate at a particular pressure and should support MERV ratings of one to four. A higher MERV value increases resistance, making the system work harder. It loses efficiency and increases wear on operating components.

So, how do you decide which level of filter to use? If you have your system's operating manual or can grab it online, check for recommendations. Otherwise, go with a decent (MERV three to five) pleated filter and check it once a month to see how it is performing. Also check to see if the dust inside abates.

Spend a little more and breathe a lot easier with a regular schedule of air filter replacement. A simple change that pays big dividends.



*Pitt & Greene EMC will be closed Monday and Tuesday,
December 24th and 25th for Christmas and
Tuesday, January 1st for New Years*



Holiday Lighting Tips

This year is rapidly drawing to a close and that means the holiday lighting season is back. If your home space is in need of a decorative refresh, here are some tips to take your artistic stylings to the next level. There are two areas to cover, so let's get started.

Safety is up first. If your lights are ground mounted or can be installed standing on the floor or ground, you can skip ahead. However, since most decorations involve some installation at height, you need to do the following:

1. Have a ground crew (one or two people) to steady your ladder and pass up the decorations... an invaluable part of safety and for keeping you supplied with untangled light strings, fasteners and encouragement.
2. Remember to keep a safe distance from your overhead electric service.
3. Don't overreach. If you cannot get to a point with your body completely centered between the sides of the ladder, get down and relocate it.
4. Don't overextend the ladder. If your ladder is too short, rent or borrow a longer one. A ladder extended beyond its working limits is dangerous as is standing on rungs too close to the top.
5. Do not overload circuits by stringing more light sets together than the manufacturer recommends. Check the packaging for details.
6. Check your wires for breaks and cracks in the insulation that can lead to shorts.

Most of these tips apply equally to inside and outside decorating activities.

Light selection is next. If at all possible, invest in LED lights this season. Unlike the first versions to hit the market that were characterized by rather harsh and unattractive colors, the newest generation's colors are reminiscent of the incandescent lights of yore.

Why go the LED route? Longevity and cost of operation are the two key reasons. Unlike incandescent lights, whether the large or mini bulb, LEDs will last for many, many years. LEDs have no filaments to burn out. Aside from physically destroying the bulb, the LED is amazingly robust. Given the modest number of hours of operation, you can expect LEDs to last seven or more years.

Then there is the cost of operation benefits from LEDs. These gems of technological advancement truly sip electricity. A reasonable estimate of power consumption is 7 watts per 100 lights. How does that compare to the old incandescent? Each of those bulbs used 12 watts so a string of 100 devoured 1200 watts.

Truly want to manage the cost of operating holiday lights? Invest in timers to turn the lights on and off automatically. Really into gadgets? Invest in a smart plug for your lights you can program and control from your smart phone.

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

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Durante fines de semana, días festivos y después del
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252-753-8778

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