

For immediate release:
6/4/2012

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Summertime Energy Saving Tips
from the Milford Renewable Energy Advisory Committee (REAC)

Most people consider energy saving tips with the approach of winter, but there's plenty of ways to conserve energy in the summer months as well. Here's a few great ways to cut your power usage and still enjoy the nice weather:

- Cook outdoors whenever possible, especially if you have central air conditioning. Heating up your kitchen while the AC fights to keep it cool can incur a larger than normal electricity bill. Cooking outdoors makes for better tasting food and keeps the kitchen cool, so cook on your barbecue grill whenever possible.
- Use window shades to keep the sun from heating your house in the day time, and use a window fan to cool the house at night. Opaque roller shades will block up to 80% of the sun, and white venetian blinds will block closer to 50%. Keeping the sun out during the day and cooling the house with a fan will reduce your air conditioning expense.
- Reversible ceiling fans are a great way to reduce both heating and cooling costs. Cooler air stays closer to the floor, while warmer air gathers near the ceiling. During the summer, a ceiling fan spinning counter-clockwise will pull that cooler air up into the room, making it more comfortable for the occupants. Likewise, spinning the fan clockwise during heating season will push warmer air down, again making the room more comfortable.
- Use fans as often as you can. Sitting in a room with just a 2 mile-per-hour breeze makes you feel as cool at 82 degrees as you would at 78 with no breeze.
- Don't cool the house when you're not at home. If you're leaving the house for four hours or longer, set the thermostat at 85. It will take less power to cool the house when you return than it would to keep the house cool the entire time you're gone.
- Put window air conditioners on a timer. You may not like coming home to a room that's too hot to relax in, but keeping it cool all day when you're not there wastes a lot of energy. Plug the unit into a timer and set it to come on a half hour before you get home – problem solved!
- Maintain your air conditioners properly. Clean the condensers and filters, use a fin comb to straighten out any bent fins, and replace or recharge the refrigerant every two years. Any AC units on southerly facing sides of the house should be kept out of direct sunlight with an awning or other covering so that they stay cool and work more efficiently.
- Use a dehumidifier during humid weather. Humid air feels warmer than dry air – running a dehumidifier will allow you to set the thermostat a little higher and reduce your cooling bills.

The Milford Renewable Energy Advisory Committee (REAC) is a volunteer committee reporting to the Board of Selectmen on the topics of renewable energy and energy conservation. The committee meets monthly at the Milford Town Library, and there are currently two openings for new members. Interested parties should contact the Town Administrator's office at town hall to apply to serve on the committee. The committee's web site is www.milford.ma.us/reac, and they can be reached by email at MilfordREAC@gmail.com.

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