

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

HOW YOUR THERMOSTAT AFFECTS YOUR ELECTRIC BILL

One of the biggest influences on your home's energy use — and your electric bill — is the weather. How much it affects your bill depends on several factors, including your home's efficiency, insulation, and air leaks. Personal comfort also plays a role, as does the difference between the thermostat setting inside and the temperature outside. During especially cold or hot days, your heating and cooling system has to run more often and work harder because of the temperature gap between the exterior and interior of your home.

Let's say you keep your thermostat set to 70 degrees year-round. If outside temperatures reach 85 degrees in the summer, there would be a 15-degree gap between the temperature inside your home and the temperature outside. This gap becomes smaller when temperatures go down during the night, so your air conditioning doesn't have to work as hard to overcome the difference.

Winter is a very different story, however. The same thermostat setting of 70 degrees would have a daytime gap of 40 degrees if the outside temperature is in the 30s. When the sun sets, temperatures drop and the gap increases. If temperatures dip to below zero degrees, your heating system must work against a 70-degree difference!

Receiving a bill that is higher than expected can be shocking and stressful. Learning how to monitor and manage your electric use can help you take charge of your electric bills. While you can't control the weather, you can use electricity wisely by following these tips to help save energy and money this winter.

Set your thermostat to 68 degrees. Maximize your energy savings by lowering the temperature to 65 degrees at night and when you are away from home for more than a few hours.

Don't use space heaters. Using space heaters may cost a lot more than you think. Despite some advertising claims, portable electric heaters all have the same efficiency, and most use 1,500 watts. This equates to using roughly 20 cents of electricity per hour. Doing the math, that means that using a single space heater for eight hours a day costs almost \$50 per month! Find out how much space heaters add to your electric bill by using the energy calculators on Firelands' website at www.firelandsec.com/energy-education.

Fix air leaks. Inexpensive caulking and weatherstripping can go a long way toward increasing your home's comfort and efficiency. Less warm inside air will escape to the outdoors, reducing your energy use and your bills.

Use SmartHub to analyze how you're using electricity. SmartHub can be used for much more than paying your bill and reporting power outages. The app provides insights into your electric use and allows you to compare energy consumption over time and monitor how changes in weather impact your electric use. To learn more about SmartHub and download the free app, visit www.firelandsec.com/smarthub-101.

DID YOU KNOW?

SmartHub shows you how the temperature might have affected your bill. **The free SmartHub app can be downloaded from Google Play or Apple App Store.**

