



Florida Public Service Commission

Consumer Bulletin

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Commissioner



ENERGY CONSERVATION

Last month, my column featured an article on water conservation tips to help you and your family conserve water. This month, I would like to focus on another form of conservation -- energy conservation.

Reducing energy consumption is important to all of us for several reasons: you help save dwindling natural resources, improve the environment, increase the overall comfort of your home or business, and save money in the process! Not a bad bargain. Reductions can be accomplished both by personal conservation practices and by taking advantage of energy efficient upgrades to physical structures. While refurbishing your home or business for energy efficiency entails some expense up front, it can provide a *10- to 60-percent return on your investment per year*. Most homes and businesses can generally benefit from implementing energy efficiency measures, no matter their age.

Achieving energy efficiency needn't be done all at once. Any time you're buying a new appliance, upgrading your heating or cooling system, even purchasing a light bulb, is a good time to make the energy-efficient choice. Some improvements are so important that they might be considered outside of regular maintenance. These include improvements to the building envelope (replacing the windows and beefing up insulation in walls, floors and attic), minimizing air leakage, improving efficiency of heating and cooling equipment, and purchasing more-efficient appliances and lighting. Check with your serving utility for programs that may provide assistance.

If you are not sure where to find problem areas in your home or business, ask your local utility for a low-cost (and in many cases free) energy audit. If your utility company does not provide the service, ask your state energy office for a list of companies that can provide the type of audit you need. For a fee, an auditor will come to your home or business, assess the problem and identify low-or no-cost ways to save energy.

You may also contact the Florida Public Service Commission (PSC). The PSC can assist by providing you with a series of brochures containing pertinent energy conservation tips. We've found that reductions in energy demand through conservation are not only a smart move for all residents of Florida, but also a matter of vital state importance.

For copies of our free brochures on energy conservation, please call the PSC at **1-800-342-3552**. You may also contact us by e-mail at **contact@psc.state.fl.us**, or visit our Internet home page at **http://www.floridapsc.com**. Once there, visit the PSC's page detailing utility conservation programs at **http://www.psc.state.fl.us/general/publications/industry.html**, and our page on reducing electric bills at **http://www.psc.state.fl.us/general/publications/101summer.html**.

CONSERVATION TIPS

- ◆ Run the AC thermostat set on "Auto," never on "Fan." Set the temperature above 74 if you find it reasonably comfortable.
- ◆ Plant shade trees. Outside shade can reduce air conditioning costs by 30 percent. Shade on the east and west sides of the house is most important.
- ◆ Vent the clothes dryer to outside the house -- otherwise it pours heat and moisture into the house air.
- ◆ Clean the dryer lint filter frequently and check the outdoor vent opening. When lint slows the airflow, the dryer runs longer. When the vent is clogged, clothes get a long damp tumbling - and the dryer uses more energy.
- ◆ Arrange items in your refrigerator for quick removal and return. Your refrigerator cools the food, but heats the kitchen. The longer the door is open, the longer it runs, heating the kitchen and raising your air conditioning costs.
- ◆ Use a microwave oven instead of the range/oven. The microwave avoids heat in the kitchen and reduces preparation time.
- ◆ Turn off lights as you leave a room, especially in the summer -- they add heat to a room. In fact, almost 99 percent of a light's energy use is converted to heat, 1 percent to light. Use energy efficient bulbs.

E. Leon Jacobs, Jr. is a Florida Public Service Commissioner. The PSC sets the rates utility companies charge for natural gas, electric and telephone service within the state. In 36 counties, it sets the price you pay for the water you drink, if your water company is privately-owned.