



## **How Can I Lower My Utility Bills?**

Every time the cost of energy rises our customers want to know how to lower their utility bills without sacrificing comfort. The good news is there are several things a homeowner can do without spending a fortune. First, be sure to purchase a programmable thermostat. If installed and used properly a programmable thermostat can save as much as 15% on your utility bills.

Second, have your heating and cooling systems tuned up regularly, even if they are new. (Yes, it is necessary to maintain even a brand new system.) The best way to handle this is to enroll in a preventive maintenance plan through your air conditioning company. Clean, well maintained systems don't work as hard, so they don't require as much energy to operate. We recommend that you use good quality pleated air filters and change them at least every three months.

The next recommendation requires an investment but if you can scrape the money together, the payback should be less than 3 years. Here we are talking about insulation and you should have at least 18" of blown insulation in your attic. Insulation settles over time so even if your house was originally well insulated, it may need to have several inches added. (Not only will your energy bills be lower, your house should be much quieter with new insulation!)

Of course, if your heating and cooling system is over 10 years old you should be able to reap 30% to 40% energy savings benefits by replacing it with a new, high efficiency system. This will require a substantial investment but repayment should occur in 5 years or less.

There are lots of other money saving ideas, but these are the places we would recommend you start looking.

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