

LEWIS COUNTY CHAPTER OF OLYMPIA MASTER BUILDERS



Prep Your Home to Save on Summer Utility Bills

Summer is a time known for vacations, beaches and higher than usual utility bills. The average U.S. residential customer's electricity bills will total \$412 between June and August this year, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Consuming less energy can help you save money on utility bills. Fortunately, there are several easy ways to reduce your energy costs during the dog days of summer.

Fix Air Leaks

Control ventilation to help control costs. When air enters and leaves your home through cracks and openings, you have an air leak. Look for possible leaks outside and inside of your home. Exterior areas where two different building materials meet, such as siding and chimneys, are havens for

air leaks. Inside your home, gaps can be found in places such as door and window frames, baseboards and attic hatches. Depending on the type of leak, you can caulk, seal or add weather-stripping to reduce air leaks in your home and potentially save money.

Seek out Energy Vampires

If you have an electronic gadget or appliance that uses electricity when plugged in but not in use, you have an "energy vampire." Electronics plugged into your wall outlets can add to your utility bill. Common household items that are plugged in and zap electricity when not in use include: hair dryers, video game consoles, cable boxes and portable fans. Unplug devices to save energy and

eliminate energy vampires.

Check Your Home Insulation

Heat flows from warmer to cooler temperature spaces. Insulation provides a protective layer between the heat radiating on your roof and the interior of your home. If your home is not properly insulated, heat can enter your home and your air conditioner will have to work harder to keep it cool. Older homes may have little to no insulation in the ceiling and in the walls. Seek out a professional to determine how much insulation to add. You can also make sure your attic door is insulated and closed tight. Attic vents should never be blocked by insulation.

Air Conditioning Tune-Up

If you want to optimize the performance of your air conditioner so it will provide comfort through the summer months, hire a professional for a tune-up. At a minimum, your



air conditioner filters should be cleaned and replaced according to the manufacturer's instructions. According to Sharon Tisler of Chehalis Sheet Metal Heating & Cooling, "The purpose of preventative maintenance is to keep your HVAC system up and running all season long with no surprise breakdowns, enabling you to begin the cooling season with reliable and efficient service while operating at maximum efficiency." Window blinds and shades are another way to help reduce the heat in your home.

Many of the suggestions

outlined here are usually do-it-yourself type jobs, but when you want to tackle a more extensive project, you'll want to call the Lewis County professionals at Olympia Master Builders (OMB). Member remodelers and suppliers can help you identify and create a maintenance plan and perform the duties to save water, energy and money. For more information and tips on how to make your home more efficient this summer, visit omb.org for our online searchable database of Lewis County Members.

STRATEGY INSURANCE

Lewis County seeks Consultant for help with comprehensive plan update

The Lewis County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) has authorized a Request for Proposal (RFP) to hire a consultant to guide the county through their comprehensive plan update process. Lewis County and all cities

in the county are required by the Washington State Growth Management Act to update their comprehensive plans. The Lewis County Comprehensive Plan identifies a vision for the future for the community, and establishes

a set of long-term goals, policies and land use patterns for growth over a 20-year period. Updates will include changes to the zoning map and development regulations. The updates must be completed by June 2025.

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