

Green Scene

Summer is a great time to take a vacation and just get away from it all. However, unless you take action, the appliances and electronic devices in your home will not get a break and your next month's energy bill may be business as usual. Before you leave on your next trip, take a few minutes and follow these simple steps. You can minimize energy consumption in your empty house and maybe save a few dollars for your next vacation.

Water Heater—Unless you have a tankless unit, your water heater will keep on running (and costing you money) to keep the water warm until you get back. Turn down the setting to as low as possible to reduce this "standby" heat loss while you are away.

Refrigerator—Your refrigerator is one of the biggest energy users in a typical home. If you are leaving for a short period of time, change the refrigerator thermostat to a higher setting, 38° for the refrigerator, 5° for the freezer. For longer trips (such as four weeks or more) consider emptying your refrigerator and unplugging it.

Air Conditioner—There is no need to keep your house cool while you are sitting on the beach hundreds of miles away. Turn off your air conditioner or

set the thermostat to 85° or higher. To avoid coming home to an overheated house, use a programmable thermostat and set it on vacation mode to re-cool your house shortly before your expected return.

Lights—Turn off all lights in your home before you leave. You may wish to maintain an outdoor or indoor light for nighttime security. Consider installing a timer. This will limit the illumination to only a few hours a day and help to make it appear as if someone is at home.

Electronics—There may be a "phantom load" haunting your empty home (and costing you money) while you are away. Turning off electronic devices is a good energy savings strategy, but remember, digital displays, instant-on features, and remote controls consume energy while not in use. Unplug all electronic devices while you are away.

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Saving Energy
While on Vacation

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