

## Message from Advise Guy Aaron Jackson



We are in the midst of the winter season so I'm sure you've noticed your heating system running quite a bit over the last couple of months. If you have electric heat, the increased runtime has produced a noticeable change in your bill. This is normal, but there are several actions the average homeowner can take to lessen the impact of winter heating costs on their budget.

### Best Practices

Maintaining a proper thermostat setting is the most important action you can take to mitigate the cold weather's impact on your bill. The recommended thermostat setting for heat is 68 degrees and it's best to set it and forget it. Moving the thermostat up and down causes the heating unit to use more electricity, especially if the system is a heat pump. Instead of increasing the thermostat setting, dress warmly, use a blanket or quilt, or utilize another heating method like a fireplace or gas heater to warm the space you are using.

Air circulation is vital when it comes to heating or cooling

a home. When using your heat pump or other type of central heating system it is important that all of the vents in all rooms are fully open. Also, every door to every room in the home should be open at least two inches. Lastly, the return filter(s) for your unit should be checked and changed out regularly. With all vents open, interior doors cracked, and a clean return filter, the heat being produced by your system will be able to flow from the registers in the various rooms back to the return, warming the entire home uniformly. This free flow of heat helps the system satisfy the thermostat sooner, lessening runtime and lowering your bill.

Heating system preventative maintenance is a must for combating high electricity bills and avoiding costly repairs. Have your heating and cooling system serviced at least once per year by a qualified technician. It's best to have this done in the spring or fall each year so that the unit is in good working order during the winter and summer; ready for the more extreme temperatures we can experience during those

seasons. Times of prolonged cold weather tend to amplify issues with poor performing heating systems. If you have a heat pump and notice on your thermostat that the auxiliary heat is frequently operating when the outdoor temperature is over about 40 degrees, this could indicate a problem which could significantly increase your electric bill.


Lastly, keep exterior doors closed during the winter months. It's also a good idea to check over all of your windows to ensure that they are tightly closed. And speaking of windows, utilize the warm rays of the sun during the day by opening blinds or curtains.

With these simple tips you can lessen the impact the winter weather has on your electric bill.



PO Box 931  
Dunn, NC 28335  
910.892.8071  
800.338.5530  
sremc.com



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