

ADVISE *Guys*

'Tis the season to be jolly and the season to save energy. The holidays are a time to gather with family and friends, to be merry and to be thankful for our everyday blessings that are bestowed upon us. With so much going on during this time of the year, it's also a time that we may neglect our energy-saving habits. There are steps you can take this year to help save energy and money.

Mind your thermostat

The recommended thermostat setting during the winter months is 68 degrees when in heat mode and the fan should always be set to auto. Having a house full of family and friends during the holidays can warm up a home pretty quickly.

You may also find yourself cooking more during this time of the year. The added heat from more bodies and cooking allows you to decrease the thermostat even more. This decreased setting will lessen the run time on your HVAC system. If you have a fireplace with a damper, make sure the damper is closed when you are not using the fireplace. By closing it, you are preventing the warm air in your home from escaping out of the chimney.

If you do a lot of cooking, try cooking as many dishes as possible at one time. Hosting a potluck meal is a great way to cut back on oven use. It can also give you more time to relax and enjoy the season.

Energy-efficient lighting

For me, the holidays are not complete without some type of Christmas decorations. Putting up Christmas lights and decorations become a tradition for many families.

If you purchase lights, consider light emitting diode (LED) Christmas lights. LEDs can be up to 90 percent more efficient than incandescent bulbs. On top of saving energy and money, they are also safer. LED bulbs are not as hot as incandescent bulbs and reduce the risk of combustion along with burnt fingers. The cooler bulbs are safer to use on your Christmas tree, wreaths and garlands as well. They are made with epoxy lenses that give it more resistance against breakage. Just like the LED bulbs in your home, they will last longer than incandescent, halogen and CFL bulbs.

When you have your Christmas tree lights on, turn off lamps and other lights. Even though LEDs are more efficient and safer, you do not want to keep them on all the time. Make sure timers are installed and/or you unplug lights to ensure they do not stay on around the clock.

Adjustments for time away

If you travel instead of hosting during the holidays, it's important to adjust your thermostat accordingly. Remember, your HVAC system will operate to satisfy the thermostat set point you leave it at or run based off



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of a programmable schedule.

If you are going to be gone a few days, adjust the thermostat down to a 50-55 degree setting. You want to leave a little heat in case the weather is extremely cold to prevent pipes from freezing and bursting. This practice is something you should do any time you are leaving for a few days during the winter months and not just during the holidays.

Also unplug devices or small appliances that won't be used and make sure your timers are set for any lighting or decorations you wish to have on for periods of a time.

For tools and more information on ways to save, you can visit our website at sremc.com or call the Advise Guys at 910-892-8071. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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