



Cool Ways to Save Energy This Summer

By Tom Lienhard, PE, CEM

The measures that help keep our homes warm in the winter also keep them cool in the summer. That means proper insulation and air sealing techniques around windows and doors are important when it comes to successfully keeping the heat outside in the summer and inside during the winter.

Much of the heat we feel in our home in the summer comes from solar energy absorbed by the roof, which then radiates the heat into the attic, eventually working its way into your home. To help keep the summer heat out, make sure your attic has adequate ventilation. Gable, soffit and roof vents, among other options, can lower the temperature in your attic by about 30 degrees in the summer according to the Department of Energy. An attic needs a year-round flow of natural air, provided your insulation is R-38 or greater, but make sure your attic soffit vents are not covered with insulation.

When looking for energy efficient options for cooling your home, consider a whole house fan. This type of fan pulls air in through open windows and exhausts hot air through the attic or roof, flushing out the built-up heat and cooling your home in the process.

Among other fan options, the ceiling fan is the most effective because it creates a wind-chill factor on your skin, making you feel cooler. Also, running the fan on your furnace will pull cool air from your basement and circulate it throughout your home. Both options may be all you need to cool your home in the evening and minimize your air conditioning cost. If your air conditioning system is more than 12 years old, consider replacing it with an ENERGY STAR qualified model for additional energy savings.

Check out this link from the Federal Trade Commission for more tips on cooling your home:
www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/alerts/alt091.shtm.

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