9 ways to save on your energy bills.



In the U.S., the average household will spend more than $2,000 on energy bills every year – and that's a lot. However, at Frankenmuth Insurance, we believe understanding your payments is the easiest way to reduce them, which is why we're offering a crash course in Energy 101. Ready to get started?

1. **Adjust your thermostat.** Cutting your heating and cooling costs could be easier than you think. According to the US. Department of Energy, bumping your thermostat back 10°F (for eight hours a day) could save you 10%. Want to see if it works? This month, while you're asleep or away, simply set the inside temperature closer to the outside temperature. After all, the closer they are, the lower your bill will be. Or, to make it even easier on yourself, invest in a smart thermostat. Part of their appeal is that they get to know you and your schedule, which means they put the temperature back to normal before you need it to be.
2. **Seal your ducts.** Every home has a series of metal tubes in its walls, floors and ceilings. It's how air (from your furnace or air conditioner) travels from room to room. The problem is, even the smallest gap can cause this air to leak into spaces that don't need it. And that can add hundreds of dollars a year to your heating and cooling bills. To ensure your ducts are distributing air properly, contact a qualified professional. Additionally, make sure your furniture isn't blocking airflow from the registers.
3. **Install ceiling fans.** Not only are ceiling fans cost efficient, they're energy efficient. In fact, if you use a ceiling fan along with your air conditioner, you can raise your thermostat setting by about 4°F and not even notice a difference. Bonus points if you invest in one with the ENERGY STAR® label, because they have been proven to move air 20% more efficiently than standard models.
4. **Plant trees.** According to the Arbor Day Foundation, homeowners can save up to 20% on their energy bills if they plant trees in the right places. A strategically positioned tree will create shade – helping to keep you cool and cut your costs. (Just don't forget to trim dead branches!)
5. **Switch to energy-efficient lighting.** Did you know the cost of electricity can fluctuate depending on where you live? The average household dedicates about 5% of their energy budget to lighting.

But, what if you could get the same amount of light for less money? According to EnergyStar, light bulbs with the Energy Star label use about 70-90% less energy, and each one can save you up to $80.

6. **Avoid the oven.** Most days, there's no way around it. But making food in the toaster or convection oven can be quicker, and less costly. Compared to your full-sized oven, these use one-third to one-half as much energy – making them the perfect choice for leftovers and/or small snacks.
7. **Use less hot water.** Did you know water heating can cost you between $400 and $600 each year? Energy experts recommend turning your water heater's thermostat to 120°F. Then, try shortening your showers and washing your clothes in cold water.
8. **Replace old equipment.** How old is your air conditioner? Your furnace? Your refrigerator? Oftentimes, older equipment and appliances use more energy, which ultimately costs you more money. If you can upgrade to the latest and greatest, again, look for the ENERGY STAR label. A home with certified products will use about 35% less energy and save more than 8,000 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions, per year.
9. **Plug into smart power strips.** Chances are, you turn off your devices when you're done using them. But even after that, some are still sucking energy. These "vampire loads" can add nearly 10% to your monthly electric bill, but there's a quick fix. An advanced power strip can help reduce wasted electricity by preventing electronics from drawing power when they're idle. And that can save you up to $100 a year. Just remember: You should never use power strips for window air conditioners, dehumidifiers or space heaters, as they could become a fire hazard

Feeling like an energy conservationist? Good. Now that you know how to save on your energy bills, learn how to save the planet. Read our blog post: 7 ways to go green in your home.