

Serving up Savings



The holiday season is just around the corner and soon, festive music will flood the airwaves, sparkling lights and decorations will adorn homes and businesses, and good tidings will abound.

The holidays also bring a frenzy of decorating, cooking and family gatherings, and amid the hectic hustle and bustle, you may receive higher-than-usual energy bills.

Keeping this in mind, I thought this month would be a good time to remind CNMEC members of a few programs and efficiency tips to help lower your monthly energy use.

Programs designed to help you save.

Winter months typically bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. Making minor, low-cost improvements, like weatherstripping exterior doors and caulking around old, drafty windows can make a positive impact on energy bills. If you're not sure where to start, contact CNMEC to schedule a free home energy evaluation.

We also offer time-of-use electric rates, which can help you achieve greater savings by controlling when you use the most energy at home.

Our team of member service representatives is available to help, so we encourage you to give us a call if you'd like to learn about specific programs and services that can lower your bills.

Be festive without breaking the bank.

If you're like my family, it's almost become a tradition bring the Christmas decorations down from the attic faster than we can finish the Thanksgiving turkey. With Christmas lights adorning our home for well over a month, we decided to make the switch to LEDs to save energy.

LED holiday lights use 88% less energy than incandescent holiday lights. To put that into perspective, the Department of Energy estimates that with standard holiday decorations, LED lights typically increase energy bills by about \$5 to \$7. But with incandescent lights, energy bills will typically increase by \$33 or more. For homes that go above and beyond with incandescent holiday lighting (think Clark Griswold), energy bills could increase by as much as \$350. Beyond energy savings, LEDs provide additional benefits, such as being shock-resistant, shatterproof, and cool to the touch, making them safer for the home.

Cook up energy savings in the kitchen.

If you plan to have family and friends over this holiday season, you can cook up energy savings by using small counter-top appliances like microwaves, air fryers and slow cookers when possible, as they use much less energy than the stove-top or oven.

When using the oven, bake multiple dishes at once for maximum efficiency. After all, it takes as much energy to cook one dish as it does to cook several. Turn the oven off a few minutes before the recipe's end time and allow the residual heat to finish baking the dish. Once the food is done, leave the stove door ajar to allow the residual heat to warm the room. When using the stove top, match the pan size to the burner to maximize the stove top's efficiency.

We hope a few of these tips will be helpful as we approach the holiday season. Remember, we're here to answer any questions you have about managing energy use or your monthly bills. With a little planning upfront, you can find efficient ways to save on everything from holiday décor to your favorite soup recipes.

From your friends at CNMEC, we hope you have a wonderful holiday season.



CNMEC office hours the week of Thanksgiving will be 7:00 am - 3:30 pm Monday - Wednesday (closed Thursday and Friday)

Five Ways to Safeguard Your Home This Winter

As the temperatures drop and the days grow shorter, there's a natural inclination to create a warm and cozy haven at home. Unfortunately, as we see increased use of heating equipment, candles and electrical items, the number of home fires tends to increase during winter months.

Here are five ways you can safeguard your home for the winter season.

- 1. Ensure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working properly.** If your detectors are battery-operated, replace the batteries annually. Test the detectors once a month and give them a good dusting to ensure the sensors are clear of dirt and debris.
- 2. Inspect electrical cords.** We depend on more cords during winter, whether for holiday lighting, extension cords or portable heaters. Before using any corded items, double check to make sure cords aren't frayed or cracked. If you use portable space heaters, remember to keep them at least 3 feet away from flammable items. Use models that include an auto shut-off feature and overheat protection. Space heaters can take a toll on your energy bills. Use them efficiently (to heat smaller spaces) and safely. Never plug a space heater into a power strip. Speaking of power strips...
- 3. Avoid overloading electrical outlets and power strips.** When overloaded with electrical items, outlets and power strips can overheat and catch fire. If you use power strips for multiple devices, make sure the strip can handle the electrical load. For a safer bet, look for power strips that include surge protection.
- 4. Clean the fireplace to improve safety and efficiency.** There's nothing better than a warm fire on a chilly night, but it's important to maintain your fireplace for safety. As wood burns, a sticky substance known as creosote builds up in the chimney. When creosote buildup becomes too thick, a chimney fire can ignite. The chimney should be cleaned at least once a year to reduce fire risks. Regular cleaning also improves air flow and limits the amount of carbon monoxide that seeps indoors.
- 5. Practice safety in the kitchen.** As we spend more time in the kitchen during the holiday season, be mindful of potential fire hazards. Never leave food that's cooking on the stove-top unattended. Clean and remove spilled foods from cooking surfaces and be mindful of where you place flammable items like dish towels.

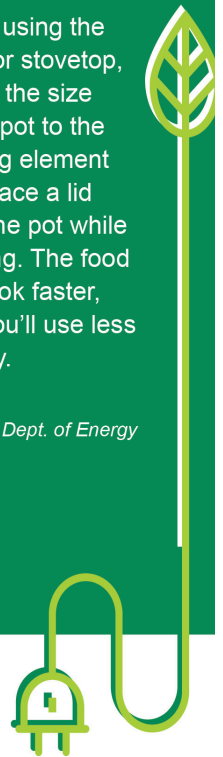
CNMEC wants you and your family to stay safe during the winter season. Go to www.cnmec.org for additional safety tips.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

The holiday season is upon us, and that means we'll be using more energy in the kitchen. When possible, cook with smaller countertop appliances instead of the stovetop or oven. Smaller appliances like slow cookers, air fryers and Instant Pots consume less energy.

When using the oven or stovetop, match the size of the pot to the heating element and place a lid over the pot while cooking. The food will cook faster, and you'll use less energy.

Source: Dept. of Energy



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