



# Housing Fact Sheets

## For Renters Only: Saving Energy in Your Apartment

### Temperature Control

- Remember that the temperature at which you set the thermostat will affect your energy savings.
- Thermostats should be set no higher than 72°F during the day and evening when people are home.
- During each 24-hour period, you will save about 3% on your heating bill for every 1° that you lower the thermostat setting. For example, if you normally keep your thermostat set at 75° all the time, and you lower it by 3° to 72°, you will save about 9% (3x3%) on your heating bill. In other words, you will save about 9 cents for every dollar you spend on heating costs.
- For the 8-hour period at night when you're sleeping, you will save an extra 1% on your heating bill for every 1° that you set back the thermostat. For example, if you lower your thermostat from 72° to 65° at night, you will save another 7 cents for every heating dollar you spend.
- You may want to lower the thermostat setting below 72° at night or during the day when people are not home. Some people turn their thermostats down to 60° or 55° at night.
- If you feel there is a problem with the furnace and you can't stay warm, **do not use the stove for additional heat—it is dangerous.** Contact the building manager; there may be a problem with the furnace or boiler.
- Do not open your windows if it gets too hot in your apartment. This wastes energy and money. When you open a window, you lose heat you already paid for. Plus, the furnace will pump out even more heat until the window is closed or the thermostat is turned down.
- If you have a furnace in your apartment, turn down the thermostat when it gets too warm.

- If your building is heated with a central boiler, you could close the radiator valves in the rooms that are too warm. You could also notify the building manager that your apartment is too warm. The manager may be able to adjust the boiler controls to lower your apartment temperature.
- People generate heat. If you have a group of people in your apartment, let the heat they give off help keep your apartment warm. Turn down your thermostat and save some money. Turn the thermostat back up when they leave.
- On sunny days, take advantage of the free heat. Open blinds, shades, and curtains, especially if your windows face south, to help keep your apartment warm. Then simply turn down the thermostat or close the radiator valves to keep from getting too hot. At night, close the blinds, shades, and curtains to help keep heat in your apartment rather than allowing it to escape through the window.

### **In the Summer**

- During the day, to keep heat out of your apartment, keep window shades or blinds down and closed. It even helpful to keep the windows themselves closed to keep hot air from blowing into your apartment.
- In the evening and early morning, open windows to allow cooler air in.

### **Hot Water**

If you have a water heater in your apartment, these tips can save you money. If you don't have a hot water heater in your unit, your building has a central water heater that supplies hot water for all the apartments, and this section does not apply.

- If you leave for vacation turn the water heater down. There's no reason to reheat the same water over and over again if you are not going to use it.
- Set water heater temperature at 115°. This temperature provides comfortable hot water for most uses. However, if you have a dishwasher, check the owner's manual first to see what temperature is required to clean dishes.
- If the doors to the closet that houses your hot water heater have louvers or grills, do not cover or set anything in front of them.
- Notify the landlord or building manager if any of your faucets leak. One drip can waste up to 48 gallons of water per week. If it's a hot water faucet that's leaking, you're literally sending your energy dollars down the drain.

## **Kitchen Stove**

- If you have three dishes to be cooked in the oven at slightly different temperatures (325°, 350° and 375°, for example), pick the average temperature (350° in this example) to cook all three dishes at once
- Use pots and pans that fit the burners. Pans that fit a burner absorb more of the energy, reducing the amount of heat that is lost. Keep ovens and burners clean. A clean oven uses energy more efficiently.
- Use the broiler when possible. The broiler uses less energy, and preheating is not required.
- Use the kitchen exhaust fan when cooking.
- Don't peek. Every time you open the oven door to look at the food, the oven temperature drops by 25° to 75°. Use a timer if your oven door does not have a window.
- Don't preheat the oven if the food requires more than one hour of cooking time.
- Don't use the oven to help heat your apartment. Besides causing a fire hazard, the fumes given off by the flames over an extended period of time can make a person sick. In fact, if you are cooking for an extended period of time, it's a good idea to use the kitchen exhaust fan or open windows to vent the fumes.
- Don't forget to turn off the oven when you are finished cooking.

## **Refrigerator**

- Check the gasket (the soft plastic piece that seals the doors to the body of the refrigerator) every so often for gaps and improper fit. The door should close firmly against the gasket. If it doesn't, cold air will leak out of the refrigerator. You can check the tightness of the door by placing a dollar bill between the gasket and the door. Close the door and then pull out the dollar. You should feel a slight drag when you pull it out. If you don't (or the dollar just falls out when you let go of it), then the gasket may be worn and should be replaced. Contact the building manager about having the gasket replaced.
- Clean the coils located on the back of the refrigerator once a year. Most refrigerators will easily slide away from the wall for cleaning. Unplug the refrigerator before cleaning the coils. Use a vacuum cleaner or soft brush. See refrigerator owner's manual for more information.
- Keep the refrigerator door open no longer than necessary. Be sure to close the door tightly when you are through.

## **Dishwasher**

- Run the dishwasher only when it's fully loaded. If necessary, scrape dirty dishes and store them in the dishwasher until you have a full load.
- Be sure to load the dishes in their proper locations. See the dishwasher owner's manual for instructions on proper loading.
- Scrape dirty dishes with cold rather than hot water.
- Check and clean the dishwasher drain as necessary. Solid pieces of food waste can build up over the dishwasher drain.
- Check the owner's manual to learn about special energy-saving features that your dishwasher may have. Use these features whenever possible to save money. Many dishwashers have energy-saving settings, such as a setting for partial loads (which uses less hot water) or energy-efficient drying cycles.

## **Washing Machine and Dryer**

- To save money, use hot water only for very dirty clothes. Most clothes can be washed in either warm or cold water. Refer to the washing instructions on the clothing labels.
- Doing full loads of laundry in the washer saves both energy and water. Sort and organize your laundry so that you will be doing full loads.
- Be careful not to overload the washer. Your clothes may not get fully clean and may need to be washed again. This is a waste of energy, water and time.
- Many washing machines have settings for smaller loads that save energy and money.
- Be sure to clean the lint from the dryer's filter after every load. The efficiency of the dryer goes down when lint collects over the dryer filter.
- Operate the dryer like the washer: don't overload it. Overloading uses excess energy because the items take longer to dry.
- Group similar types of fabrics together before drying them. For example, put towels together in one load. A lower dryer temperature may be used for certain clothes.

## **Window Air Conditioners**

Read this section if you are considering buying an air conditioner. An efficient air conditioner can save you lots of money on your electric bill.

- Just like furnaces and water heaters, air conditioners have an energy efficiency rating – EER for short. Buy an air conditioner with an EER of at least 10.

Although air conditioners with EERs higher than 10 usually cost more, you will recapture this cost by using less electricity.

- It's important to buy the correct size air conditioner (in terms of how much cooling it produces, not its dimensions). If the air conditioner is too large, it won't operate efficiently and it will use more energy and cost you more money. Ask the salesperson for help in choosing the correct size air conditioner.
- Window air conditioners have filters. Remove and clean the filter every month to help save money and keep the air in your home cleaner.
- Make sure the "fresh air" vent on the air conditioner is closed so you're not cooling outside air.
- If possible, put the air conditioner in a window that faces north or is shaded. Keeping the air conditioner out of direct sunlight improves its efficiency. Remove and store the air conditioner during winter rather than keeping it in the window.



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