



PSC “Gifts” Consumers with Ways to Save During the Winter

During the holiday season, if you’re not hosting a party, chances are you might be traveling to see family and loved ones. When you’re away from home, and the lights and electronics are off, you might THINK you’re saving money. But you’ll be surprised to know your *home* is still using energy, even when you’re not *home*! So while you’re out or travelling during the last few weeks of 2014, here are some tips to “cool down” your electric bill.

Adjust Your Thermostat: While you’re away, turn off the heat. The cold seasons are key peak times for energy consumption, and that usage can sneak up on your wallet. Consider turning off your HVAC completely. If you have to keep it on for your pets or a house sitter, consider investing in a programmable thermostat. That way you can control your heat settings, and set them to come on and off during certain hours. Heating is your home’s biggest electricity user, so try setting your thermostat to 68 degrees or lower in the winter to save energy.

Use an Appliance Timer: Investing in a built-in timer can shave dollars off your winter electric bill. When using your space heaters or holiday lights, you can set your timer to give yourself peace of mind.

Unplug: Vampire electronics are electronics that use energy even when they’re turned off. TVs, computers, chargers, and other gadgets are guilty culprits. According to a *USA Today* article, “The EPA estimates that these idle gadgets burn through more than 100 billion kilowatt hours of electricity nationwide each year. That’s about \$10 billion worth of energy.” To prevent this, make sure to unplug all your devices when not in use.

Secure your home year-round by weather-stripping your doors and windows and making sure all cracks are caulked correctly. This will help keep the cold air out. If you have a window air conditioning unit, remove it for the winter months to prevent heat from escaping through and around the unit. If it can't be moved, put a cover over it to prevent drafts.

For additional information on how you can save money on your utility bill by making small changes in your home, visit www.FloridaPSC.com.