



“ Saving energy can be as simple as making a few adjustments around the house and changing some habits. Little things can make a big difference. There’s no secret to it. You just have to know where energy is used and look at how to be most efficient. ”

Kenneth Dillon  
Sam Houston EC Energy Auditor &  
Member since 1970



Are You Wasting Energy And Money?

Saving begins at home. Take a few minutes to go through this checklist and see where you can make your home more energy efficient. You may find that little changes can result in big savings.

Want to save more? Sam Houston EC performs professional energy audits as a service to our members. Sam Houston EC energy audits identify areas of your home or business that use the most energy and determine how to reduce usage and costs. Following the audit, the Cooperative will provide you with a personalized, written report outlining actionable suggestions that can help you save energy and money.

Around the House	Questions to Ask
<p><b>Appliances</b></p>	<p>Do you leave them plugged in even when they aren't in use? Are they more than 15 years old? Do you regularly clean them and ensure they're in good order?</p>
<p><b>Air Conditioning System</b></p>	<p>Are you setting your thermostat for efficiency? Are you asking the AC to do something it can't? Is your unit the appropriate size for your home? Do you regularly change out air filters?</p>
<p><b>Heating System</b></p>	<p>Are you overheating? Is ductwork efficient?</p>
<p><b>Insulation</b></p>	<p>Do your walls and ceiling have enough insulation?</p>
<p><b>Fireplace and Chimney</b></p>	<p>Is the damper open?</p>
<p><b>Landscaping</b></p>	<p>Is the west side of your home well shaded? Is your AC unit shaded by landscaping?</p>
<p><b>Lighting</b></p>	<p>Are there lights in your home you leave on all the time? Are you using proper wattage? Can you replace incandescent bulbs with CFLs? Do you leave lights on that aren't in use?</p>
<p><b>Water Heater</b></p>	<p>Is it set for efficiency?</p>
<p><b>Windows and Doors</b></p>	<p>Is air leaking in or out around or near these openings? Are your windows made for efficiency?</p>

## Answers and To Dos

Unplug your coffee pot, cell phone charger, toaster and the like. Items you leave plugged in when not in use draw power.

Older appliances are less efficient. In some cases it may be worth an upgrade to a more efficient and modern version. This is especially true for water heaters and refrigerators, the two major appliances that use the most electricity in your home.

Clean the coils on your refrigerator, drain your water heater once a year and clean behind and under the stove regularly to ensure these major appliances run as efficiently as possible.

If you don't have a programmable thermostat, it could be the best \$20 you spend. It's easy to install and makes saving a breeze. For maximum efficiency set the thermostat to 85 degrees when no one is home. And set it to go down to 78 in the evenings.

Remember, even the best AC system runs most efficiently at 20 degrees cooler than the outside temperature. So, if it's 95 degrees outside, set your thermostat to 75 or above so it won't run all day and waste energy.

Have a professional evaluate the size of your AC system for your home. A larger than needed unit draws more power and may not run as efficiently as a more appropriate sized unit, wasting energy and money.

A dirty air filter leads to inefficient cooling. Mark your calendar to change them out regularly as advised by the filter manufacturer.

Efficient thermostat settings are important for your heater, too. For maximum efficiency set the thermostat to 68 and wear a light sweater.

Check ductwork for air leaks to ensure warm air isn't escaping into your attic.

If you have less than seven inches of insulation in your attic, you might consider adding more. Insulation is measured in R-values. In our area, R-38 is recommended for attics and R-15 for walls. Consider traditional rolls of insulation or spray insulation.

A fireplace can lose as much heat as it produces. Be sure your damper is properly fitted and close it when it's not in use. Leaving the damper open is like leaving a window open all winter.

Consider plantings that could help shade your home's windows. Plantings on the west side of a home are particularly helpful because they shield your home from the hot setting sun. The same landscaping that shades in the summer and helps keep things cool also provides an insulating effect and keeps things warm in the winter.

First and foremost, turn the lights out when you're not using them. That is, turn off lamps when you leave the room and the porch light off at night.

Second, consider replacing incandescents with CFLs, either as they burn out or all at one time—whichever works best for you, as long as you're moving toward replacing all your incandescent bulbs.

Turn down the temperature to the warm setting (about 120 degrees). You'll save energy and avoid the risk of being burned by hot water. Add a water heater blanket to aid in heat retention and insulate water heater pipes.

Hold a ribbon up around these key areas. If it waves, air is moving through. Caulking and weather stripping are inexpensive and easy projects that save money. Be sure to check all four sides of every door and window in your home.

Keep drapes and blinds closed to help keep heat or cold out. You can also buy a reflective film at hardware stores to help insulate windows from outdoor temperatures.

If your windows are single paned, it is a good idea to put replacing windows on your long-term list of efficiency upgrades. Though it can be costly, having energy efficient windows makes a huge impact on energy savings in the long run.

## SAM HOUSTON EC *Doing Watts Right* FOR OUR MEMBERS

Doing Watts Right extends beyond conservation. It's the mentality with which we at Sam Houston EC work on behalf of our members.

On the business end, Sam Houston EC is doing what's right by keeping costs low and reliability high by utilizing innovation, technology and employees who are second to none. We continually manage operations as efficiently as possible and take action to influence energy-related legislation that could impact consumers and our business.

On the service side, we work to take care of our customers by providing offerings that add convenience and value to your electric service, like energy audits and payment options. We also work to better our community. Sam Houston EC's service extends beyond electricity to creating opportunities for charitable action such as a blood drive or the helping hands program. We also promote education through our scholarship and safety education programs.

- In 2006, Sam Houston EC awarded \$50,000 in scholarships to 28 students seeking higher education in the State of Texas.
- Sam Houston has gathered 155 units of blood since the fourth quarter of 2005 in conjunction with the Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center. That's a total of 465 lives saved.
- The Helping Hands program has collected and distributed more than \$150,000 since 1992. Monies are allocated to members who cannot pay their bill due to financial crisis.