

What's **UP** with my bill?



Find causes of higher bills
Learn energy-saving tips
Use energy-saving resources



North Georgia Electric Membership Corporation
P.O. Box 1407
Dalton, GA 30722-1407
Phone 259-9441 Fax: 259-9625
www.ngemc.com

What's **UP** with my bill?

The heating system

- \$ You may turn your heating system's thermostat up and down like a see-saw. Sudden increases in thermostat settings can cause "strip" or emergency heating coils to activate, increasing your bill.
- \$ If you heat your home with a heat pump, your unit's efficiency is reduced when the outside temperature falls below 35 degrees. Emergency or "strip" heating coils may turn on to supplement your heat pump's regular heating capacity.
- \$ Most heating systems use electricity for some functions, such as operating the fan, and many run almost continuously when it's extremely cold.
- \$ Your heating system's ductwork may be leaking and in need of repair.
- \$ Your heating system may not be functioning at peak efficiency.
- \$ Filters on your air return grill may be clogged with dust and need to be cleaned or replaced.
- \$ Ice may have built up on your outdoor condensing unit coils, causing your heat pump's efficiency to drop. To help remedy the problem, turn your thermostat to the air conditioning mode for a few minutes to melt ice on the outside unit. Your heat pump's automatic defrost cycle may not be enough to melt the ice.
- \$ Your heating system may be too small for your home.



Water usage

- \$ If you take long winter baths and have an electric water heater, you use more electricity.
- \$ Winter brings holidays, which often means more cooking, baking and those bright holiday lights.
- \$ Hosting holiday guests, you ran your dishwasher more often and used more hot water, which may have been heated by an electric



water heater.

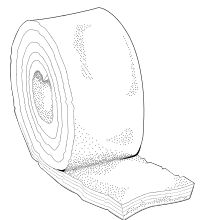
- \$ You may have leaky faucets or a leak in your hot water pipes.
- \$ You have your water heater thermostat set higher than 120 degrees.
- \$ One or both of your water heater's elements may not be working well or at all.
- \$ You may need to insulate your hot water heater pipes.
- \$ You may have kept the heater on your hot tub running consistently when not in use.

Other household habits

- \$ Shorter days and longer nights mean lights stay on longer both inside and outside.
- \$ You may be using space heaters in garages, basements or other unheated spaces.
- \$ That electric blanket or heating pad that feels so cozy on cold winter nights can cost another dollar or two to operate.
- \$ Many consumers use the clothes dryer more often in the winter.
- \$ Books or furniture could be blocking vents.

Fireplaces

- \$ Your fireplace damper may be open or leaking.
- \$ You may be trying to heat your home with a fireplace and a heat pump or central heating system at the same time. When burning, fireplaces can siphon heat from your home right up the chimney.



Lack of weatherization

- \$ Old single-pane windows are poor insulators.
- \$ Cold air is infiltrating your home through cracks around windows, doors, and wiring and plumbing openings in the house envelope.
- \$ You may have insufficient insulation in some or all areas of your home. NGEMC recommends at least R-30 in the attic, R-13 in the walls and R-19 in the floor.
- \$ Hot air is escaping through a disappearing staircase located over a heated area.

Energy-Saving Tips

- \$ Set your heating unit thermostat at the lowest comfortable temperature and leave it.
- \$ Instead of turning up your thermostat, try putting on more warm clothes, such as a sweater, sweatshirt, cap and warm socks.
- \$ Replace or clean furnace filters once a month. Dirty filters restrict airflow and increase energy use.
- \$ Have your heating system serviced annually by a member of the Quality Contractor Network. Call NGEMC for the list of QCN contractors or find it online at www.ngemc.com under Residential Services/Energy Right Heat Pumps.
- \$ Dry clothes one load after another while the dryer retains heat.
- \$ Check to be sure dryer is vented properly. Use the straightest, shortest duct available. Clean lint filter after every load.
- \$ Use small appliances whenever possible. They use less electricity.
- \$ Repair leaky faucets.
- \$ Use low-flow shower heads and faucets.
- \$ Insulate pipes going to and from the water heater tank.
- \$ Wash clothes in cold water as often as possible.
- \$ Insulate and cover spas and hot tubs. Turn your hot tub heater off when not in use.
- \$ Turn off kitchen and bath-ventilating fans after they've removed moisture. These fans can blow out a house-full of heated air if left on.
- \$ Doors and windows should stay closed even if you have storm windows and doors on the outside.
- \$ Unplug that spare refrigerator in the garage if you don't truly need it. Empty freezers and refrigerators use more electricity than those that are full.



You may also call North Georgia EMC's Energy Services Department for any questions you may have about energy savings.

Learn more online

- North Georgia EMC's Web site (www.ngemc.com). Open the Energy Education link and click Energy Saving Tips.
- Tennessee Valley Authority's *energy right*® Web site (www.energyright.com)
- Southface Energy Institute (www.southface.org) energy tips found under the Fact Sheets link.
- U.S. Department of Energy (www.doe.gov).
- Energy Guide (www.energyguide.com). Analyze your home or business energy use; shop for energy-efficient home products.
- Insulation Contractor's Association of America (www.insulate.org)
- North American Insulation Manufacturer's Association (www.naima.org)
- Energy Star® Program (www.energystar.org). The U.S. Department of Energy's program to protect the environment through superior energy efficiency.
- Federal Energy Management Program (www.eere.energy.gov/femp/procurement) focusing on energy-efficient home appliances and equipment.
- Efficient Windows Collaborative (www.efficientwindows.org) unbiased benefits of energy-efficient windows.
- National Fenestration Rating Council (NFRC) (www.nfrc.org) provides consistent ratings on window, door and skylight products.
- Saturn Resource Management Agency (www.srmi.biz) has many tips and techniques for saving energy.
- Alliance to Save Energy (www.ase.org)
- National Resources Defense Council (www.nrdc.org/air/energy/ghome.asp) promotes energy efficiency with your home as an energy system.



North Georgia Electric Membership Corporation

Area offices

Dalton	259-9441
Fort Oglethorpe	866-2231
Calhoun	629-3160
Trion	734-7341

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