



SUSSEX RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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Energy Conservation Tips for Renters and Tenants

This article is directed to those in our community who rent their living quarters. Most leases require the tenants to pay the utility bills for their apartment or home. This makes sense for most landlords since they do not control how the tenants run the property and therefore do not want to expose themselves to unexpected utility charges.

Weatherizing seals leaks and stops drafts which make the space more comfortable and saves on energy costs. There is generally a concern that spending any money on a rental property is a waste since the value accrues to the landlord. This is certainly true when it comes to major changes such as replacing windows. However, for the tips in this article, the benefits to the tenant make it worthwhile.

Now, let's look at what you can do at little or no cost. Focus first on **weather stripping and caulking**. Make sure all the exterior doors have good tight seals. Simple adhesive foam strips work well and a floor sweep can seal bottom gaps. Check the molding around windows and doors in exterior walls and use tube caulk to seal gaps where you feel air. Water - based products work well and clean up is a snap.

If your **windows** do not have storms, consider applying plastic film over them. The type that shrinks for a tight fit under the heat of a hair dryer is a good choice plus it's a hoot to install. If you are not on the ground floor, the film can be applied on the inside but take care with installation so you don't damage the molding.

Control the areas you heat and cool by closing doors, closing registers so not open all the way, move furniture so it does not block supply or return vents, reduce the setting on the thermostat or invest in a setback thermostat. Also, reduce the setting on the water heater from the factory set point to about 115 degrees.

Replace regular lights with high efficiency alternatives. Turn off lights, TVs and radios if you plan to be out of a room for any length of time. It is amazing how much energy this consumes. Install low flow showerheads and report any dripping faucets or leaky plumbing to your landlord right away.

Using **ceiling or floor fans** to circulate air also helps with both efficiency and comfort. If you use ceiling fans, have them blow down in the summer and up in the winter. This creates a cooling breeze on hot summer days and pushes warm air to the floor in winter. Floor fans can move conditioned air from one spot to another. Be sure to get floor fans that have safety guards to protect toes and fingers.

Let me close with some cautionary notes.

1. Before doing anything, clear it with your landlord.
2. When you shut down or reduce the temperature in parts of your home, be sure to keep it warm enough that any water pipes don't freeze.
3. Once you get everything sealed up, avoid using unvented supplemental heat sources that use fossil fuels because of the danger of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Everyone can benefit from such measures. Check out more tips at our web site, www.sussexrec.com under the Energy Use and Efficiency Information link on the left. The on-line energy audit is of value to renters and homeowners alike so don't forget to give it a spin.