



COOL COMFORT, SAFE SPACES

Protecting your home in hot weather

August is often the hottest month of the year, making it essential to keep your home cool in safe and efficient ways. With prolonged exposure to high temperatures, the risk of heat-related illnesses, equipment strain and elevated energy bills becomes more significant. As air conditioners work harder to maintain comfort indoors, it is important for members to make conscious decisions about how to cool their homes responsibly. By focusing on safety and energy efficiency, you can stay comfortable while avoiding unnecessary wear on your HVAC system and managing costs.

Ensure proper airflow for your AC unit

Air conditioners function best when they have unobstructed airflow. For central air systems, make sure vents are not blocked by furniture, rugs or curtains. For window units, check that the exterior is clear of debris. Outdoor central units should have at least two feet of space around them, free from shrubs or overgrowth. Adequate airflow improves efficiency and helps prevent your unit from overheating.

Use the thermostat strategically

Smart thermostats allow you to create customized cooling schedules for when you are home, away, or asleep. This programming helps reduce energy use, prevent unnecessary strain on your air conditioner and maintain consistent comfort. Many models also include remote access and learning features that adjust to your routine automatically.

Southeastern Indiana REMC offers two smart thermostat programs to help members save energy and earn incentives: the ecobee Smart Thermostat Program and Connect to Save. Each option provides unique benefits to support energy-efficient living. To learn more and choose the program that works best for your home, visit seiremc.com/smart-thermostats.

Keep filters clean

Clogged or dirty air filters reduce airflow and make your system work harder. This can increase energy use and lead to long-term damage. Check your filters monthly and replace them every one to three months. If you have pets or allergies, more frequent changes may be necessary. Keeping your filters clean improves both system efficiency and indoor air quality.

Supplement with cooling strategies

Cooling your home does not always require more air conditioning. Ceiling fans, portable fans and whole-house fans help circulate air and make rooms feel cooler. Reflective or blackout curtains, especially in sun-facing rooms, reduce heat gain during the day. Opening windows in the early morning or late evening, when outdoor temperatures are cooler, can also help refresh your space. These small changes, when used together, can reduce your reliance on air conditioning and support more sustainable energy use.

Avoid heat buildup indoors

Appliances such as ovens, stovetops, clothes dryers and dishwashers generate heat that can raise your indoor temperature. Try preparing meals with outdoor grills, slow cookers, or microwave ovens to reduce indoor heat. Whenever possible, use large appliances during early morning or evening hours. Switching to LED lighting and unplugging unused electronics can also help limit unnecessary heat inside your home.

Be mindful of outdoor electrical safety

High temperatures can take a toll not only indoors but also on outdoor electrical equipment. Extension cords, outdoor plugs and other electrical components left in direct sunlight for long periods can overheat, melt or become damaged—posing fire and safety risks. Avoid plugging multiple high-powered devices into the same outlet or cord, especially in outdoor spaces like patios or pool areas. Use only outdoor-rated cords and keep them shaded and off hot surfaces when possible. Regularly inspect cords for signs of wear, warping or heat damage and replace them as needed to prevent hazards.

Maintain your cooling system

In addition to minimizing indoor heat sources, it is important to ensure your air conditioning system is operating efficiently. Southeastern Indiana REMC offers a rebate for HVAC tune-ups, which encourages regular maintenance and helps extend the life of your system. A properly maintained HVAC unit cools more effectively and is less likely to break down during the hottest months. To apply, visit seiremc.com/hvactuneuprebate.

Keep safety and comfort top of mind

As summer temperatures reach their peak, keeping your home cool does not have to mean sacrificing safety or efficiency. By making smart choices—from maintaining your HVAC system to adjusting everyday habits—you can enjoy a comfortable home, lower your energy use and reduce the risk of system failure. Southeastern Indiana REMC is here to support you with tools, tips and programs to help you stay safe and stay cool all summer long.