



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Dog Days of Summer are Here High Temperatures, High Energy Use

News reports are warning of heat indices in the triple digits and are making recommendations that people stay indoors if possible. Staying indoors is certainly a good idea when the temperature outside is nearing 100 degrees, but when the electric bill comes in August, we will all see the effects of running those air conditioners. Heating and cooling accounts for over one-half of your total energy usage.

We are only about half-way through summer and the temperatures are already approaching near triple digits, something we normally don't see until August. Based on information supplied by The National Weather Service (NWS), the heat wave has resulted in a corresponding increase in cooling degree days, which ultimately will result in increased energy use to stay comfortable. The NWS tracks information related to daily temperatures by using a 65 degree base temperature (the temperature considered to not require any auxiliary heating or cooling). As temperatures climb above 65, cooling degrees are recorded. Cooling degree days directly correspond to the amount of energy needed to run cooling equipment to maintain comfortable surroundings.

With the month almost over, the NWS has recorded 433 cooling degree days as opposed to only 266 cooling degrees for the same first 25-day period of July 2009. The temperature rose to a sweltering 98 degrees on July 25, 2010, with the average temperature for July being 82. The highest temperature in July of 2009 was 92 with that average being 75. The excessive number of degree days translates into a 63% increase in cooling requirements from the same period last year and will, no doubt, be reflected in consumer energy usage and bills for July.

Using a typical 30-day billing cycle, an average residential consumer that normally would use approximately 1500 kWh of energy will end up using approximately 2445 kWh of energy. A bill in July 2009 that was \$149.45 will increase to \$229.37 for 2010, just because of increased air conditioning requirements.

Duck River Electric encourages members to conserve energy and lower energy bills by taking some simple steps around the home:

- Set thermostats to 78 degrees in summer. (For every degree you lower your air conditioning thermostat, you increase usage by 1%).
- Close shades and drapes during the day to keep heat out during summer.
- Run ceiling paddle fans on medium, blowing down during summer.

For more energy-saving tips, please visit www.dremc.com. While on the website complete a free online home energy evaluation that will provide immediate results that are specific to your home.