

WATT' HAPPENING

SCENIC RIVERS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

LANCASTER, DARLINGTON AND GAYS MILLS, WISCONSIN

'Watt' do I need to know about how much electricity my appliances use?

Determining how much electricity your appliances and home electronics use can help you understand how much money you are spending to operate them. Electricity is measured in units of power called watts, and one watt is a joule of energy used or produced per second.

The power consumption of small devices is usually measured in watts, while the power use of larger devices is measured in kilowatts (kW) (1 kW equals 1,000 watts). Knowing how much electricity an appliance uses and how much the electricity costs can help you decide whether to invest in a more energy-efficient appliance or make other cost-saving decisions, such as unplugging appliances when not in use. Becoming watt savvy is also helpful if you are considering purchasing a generator.

There are several ways to estimate how much electricity your appliances and home electronics use:

See the data plate

Appliances usually have data plates located on the back or inside the door. They tell you how many amps, watts and volts are needed to power the appliance. If your appliance does not list watts for some reason but does list the number of volts and amps, you can multiply them to get the number of watts.

Review the EnergyGuide label

The EnergyGuide label, a yellow-colored sticker or tag found on new products, provides an estimate of the average energy consumption and cost to operate the specific model of the appliance you are considering. The FTC requires the label, and the dollar amount is the estimated yearly operating cost based on the national average cost of electricity.

Use a monitor or meter

Wattage meters are affordable instruments that are easy to use and can measure the electricity

usage of any device that runs on 120 volts. To put it to work, just plug the monitor into the electrical outlet and then plug the device

into the monitor. The monitor will display how many watts the device uses. If you want to know how many kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity a device uses over a length of time, just leave everything set up and read the display later. Some monitors even allow you to plug in your utility's cost per kWh rate to determine how much that specific appliance costs you over a certain length of time.

Comparing an older appliance to a newer one

Now that you know how to measure the energy used by your appliances and home electronics, you can visit [EnergyStar.gov](https://www.energystar.gov) to access information that can help you decide if you should upgrade to newer, more efficient models. ENERGY STAR provides energy use data on specific products that have earned the ENERGY STAR rating. You can compare this information to your current appliances' energy use to see if an upgrade is worth your while. EnergyStar.gov also provides tools that allow you to select and compare specific models to one another. Depending on the type of appliance, ENERGY STAR-certified appliances use between 10% and 50% less energy than their standard counterparts.

If you do choose to purchase a new appliance, more energy efficient lighting or are in need of a more energy efficient water heater, be sure to look into the rebates available through Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative. You can learn more at [srecoop.org/energy-rebates](https://www.srecoop.org/energy-rebates). ■



How to conduct a DIY air leak audit

Before you repair or install more insulation, you need to identify and repair any potential air leaks in what is known as your home's envelope: outer walls, doors, windows and other openings. Potential problem areas include doors, windows, sill plates (the bottom piece of wall structure where wall studs are attached), top plates (supportive beams in the ceiling), crawl spaces, outdoor faucets, dryer vents, stove vent fans, roof eaves and overhangs, plumbing vent stacks, recessed lighting, attic hatches and air duct registers.

One way to have your home checked is by a qualified energy auditor. Or, if you want to address your own home, there are a couple of ways to do this:

By yourself

- One option is to perform a visual inspection on your own in daylight. All potential problem areas should be free from gaps and cracks.
- While lights are on in the home, also observe from the attic, crawlspace or basement. Anywhere you can see light from the interior of the house shining through gaps and cracks is another air leak location in need of repair.

With a partner

- To conduct a more thorough inspection, work with a partner at night to shine a flashlight over all potential gaps while one of you observes the house from the outside. Anywhere you can see light shine through is an air leak that needs to be sealed properly.

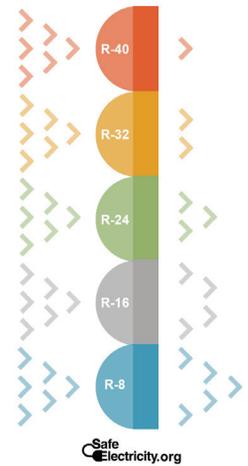
Is your home's envelope well sealed?

Most of the time, when we think of the word envelope, we think of the outer covering that our mail comes in. Or, to irritate our kids or coworker, we might push the envelope.

However, your home's envelope consists of its outer walls, windows, doors and other openings. A well-sealed envelope, coupled with the right amount of insulation, can reduce your energy use — and, in turn, your utility bills. According to EnergyStar.gov, a whopping 9 out of 10 homes in the U.S. are under-insulated. Homeowners can save an average of 15% on heating and cooling costs (or an average of 11% on total energy costs) by air sealing their homes and adding insulation in attics, floors, over crawl spaces and basements.

To determine if your home's envelope is in good shape, you might conduct a home audit to pinpoint the leaks that allow energy to escape your home — air-conditioned air in the summer and heated air in the winter.

the higher the R-value, the more efficient the insulation



DIY home energy audit

If you would like to complete your own DIY audit, find out the following:

- The type of insulation in your home.
- The R-value (rate of thermal resistance) of your insulation. Typically, the higher the R-value, the more effective it is at insulating.
- The thickness or depth (inches) of the insulation you have.

In a newer home, the builder can help identify the type of insulation used and where it is located. In an older home, you will need to perform the inspection yourself. To complete a DIY energy assessment, you will need to check the following items:

In the attic

- A general rule of thumb when inspecting the attic insulation is that if the insulation is level with or below the attic floor joists, you probably need to add more insulation.
- If you cannot see any of the floor joists because the insulation is well above them, you probably have enough, and adding more insulation may not be cost-effective.
- Insulation should be evenly distributed with no low spots; be sure to check throughout the attic to determine if there are any thin spots.
- Make sure the insulation in your attic has the appropriate R-value for where you live. Check the value printed on your existing insulation. If you cannot find the value, measure the depth of the insulation in inches. Multiply the depth by the following insulation type: 3.2 for fiberglass batting, for the loose fibers category, multiply by 2.5 for

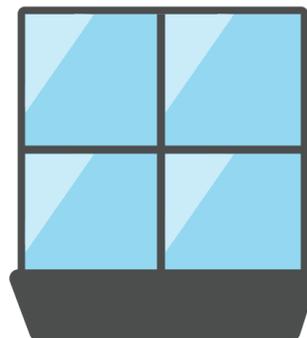
loose fiberglass, 2.8 for rock wool and 3.7 for cellulose. Then check EnergyStar.gov's recommended R-values. If your calculated value is less than the recommended levels for our region, then you should consider adding more insulation to your attic.

Behind the walls

- Turn off the power to the outlet before beginning this check. Then use a voltmeter or voltage tester to confirm that there is no power at the socket before beginning work.
- Remove the outlet cover and shine a flashlight into the crack around the outlet box. You should be able to see if there is insulation in the wall and possibly how thick it is.
- Pull out a small amount of insulation if needed to help determine the type of insulation.
- Check outlets on all floors, as well as old and new parts of your home. Just because you find insulation in one wall does not mean that it is uniform throughout your home.

For more information on energy efficiency and electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org. ■

About **30%** of a home's energy is lost through windows



Information collected from Energy.gov

Safe
Electricity.org



COOK UP ENERGY SAVINGS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.

- Clean oven burners regularly.
- Match the pan size to the burner you're using.
- Use small appliances like slow cookers and toaster ovens when possible.

**From our table to yours,
Happy Thanksgiving!**



NOV.17 Dual Fuel TESTING

Dual Fuel Program Members Load Management Test, Wednesday, November 17, 2021

2021 Winter Preparedness Test for Interruptible Heat (Dual Fuel) accounts is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 17th**. This load control test is performed in advance of the winter Full Load Control season to ensure member familiarity with the control sequence and to ensure that backup heating systems have been validated for proper function.

ELECTRICITY PUTS BREAD ON YOUR TABLE. AND KEEPS IT IN YOUR WALLET.

LOAF OF BREAD

1936..... 8¢
2021..... \$2.50

INCREASE..... 18X
Based on national averages.

SREC'S ELECTRICITY

1936..... 5¢
2021..... 11¢

INCREASE..... 2X
BASED ON AVERAGE COST PER KILOWATT HOUR



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Vegetation Management

Zielie's Tree Service will continue working on the Mt Zion substation in Crawford County during November.

It is important for SREC to maintain its rights-of-way for the following reasons:

- Accessibility for field crews, vehicles and equipment
- Fire prevention
- Reliable electric service
- Quality service with the reduction of outages and blinks
- Safety for workers and the public
- Meeting state and federal code requirements

On a daily basis, SREC employees and contractors are working throughout the area, at times on your property, to operate and maintain the electric system and our rights-of-ways. During this time, we especially appreciate your cooperation as we maintain social distancing between our essential staff and our members. **If you have questions, please contact Jay at jgardner@srec.net or call 800-236-2141 ext. 566.**



WATT'S HAPPENING

Watt's Happening is published monthly as an information service to the member-owners of Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative.

Any questions or comments can be directed to Watt's Happening, Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative, 231 North Sheridan, Lancaster, WI 53813 or telephone (608) 723-2121 or toll free 800-236-2141.

www.sre.coop

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