

Efficiency matters

SUMMER 2008

NORWICH PUBLIC UTILITIES

When it comes to managing your energy costs, Efficiency Matters. That's why we've created this special edition to keep you up to speed on NPU's energy efficiency initiatives. These include rebate programs, residential and commercial energy analyses and general information about low/no cost ways to use less energy while still staying comfortable. Questions or comments? Contact our Energy Efficiency Team at (860) 823-4514 or efficiencymatters@npumail.com



Visit the Energy Depot!

Available to all Norwich residents,

the Energy Depot has helpful, easy-to-use tools and information to answer all your energy questions.

Energy Calculator – Measure your annual energy costs for all your home's appliances and systems (natural gas and electric). This "do-it-yourself" tool is designed to provide you with costs without the need of a full-home audit. Standard and seasonal energy costs are used in the calculations.

Comparison Tool – Looking to purchase a new heating or cooling system? Use this tool before you buy to compare existing home heating, air conditioning system or water heater with a new electric or natural gas system. You can also compare two new

systems to each other. You'll get the annual energy use and cost, annual and monthly savings estimates, and much more!

Library – Looking for answers to your energy questions? The library contains detailed and specific information and will help explain your personal energy savings recommendations. It also includes sets of energy fact sheets categorized by system or appliance.

Energy Advisor – If the library didn't answer your question, you can ask the experts through the Energy Advisor. Or, you can email your question directly to NPU's energy efficiency department at efficiencymatters@npumail.com.

Using the Energy Depot is easy. Just click on the Energy Depot link on NPU's website, www.norwichpublicutilities.com.

The ENERGY STAR Program



ENERGY STAR is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy. Its goal is to help us all save money and protect the environment through energy efficient products and practices.

In 1992 the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) introduced ENERGY STAR as a voluntary labeling program designed to identify and promote energy efficient products to reduce greenhouse gas.

Results are already adding up. Through its partnerships with more than 12,000 private- and public-sector organizations, ENERGY STAR provides the technical information and tools that organizations and consumers need to choose energy efficient solutions. **Thanks to ENERGY STAR, Americans saved enough energy in 2007 alone to avoid greenhouse gas emissions from the equivalent of 27 million cars, and saved \$16 billion on utility bills!**

NPU encourages its customers to buy appliances with the ENERGY STAR label and possibly **qualify for one of our money saving rebates!** Join us in doing your part to save energy and our environment!

Source: www.energystar.gov

Turn In and Save!

By replacing your old air conditioning unit with a new, high-efficiency model, you can **reduce your air conditioning costs by 20% or more.**

To make the decision to trade in that old A/C unit even easier, NPU is participating in the Connecticut Room Air Conditioner

Turn-In Program. Available only at select locations, like Jerry's Appliances on Central Avenue and Keith's Appliances on West Thames Street, this program runs



through September 1, 2008. It offers NPU customers up to \$100 back by mail when a new ENERGY STAR air conditioner is purchased and the old unit is turned in to the participating store of purchase.

For more information on NPU's A/C Turn-In program, visit our website at www.norwichpublicutilities.com.

Understanding the Language of Summer Energy Efficiency: SEER and EER Ratings

Did you know that 16% of the electricity used during a Connecticut summer is used for air conditioning? It's true! Your A/C is one of a home or business' largest energy users. That's why NPU offers rebates on ENERGY STAR central air systems and window units. We provide the Cool Choice and A/C Turn In programs to help you save money while staying comfortable.

But what differentiates an ENERGY STAR system or unit from others? The answer is the unit's SEER or EER rating!

Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER), is most commonly used to measure the efficiency of a central air conditioner. It measures how efficiently a cooling system will operate **over an entire season**. Energy Efficiency Ratio (EER) measures the cooling capacity of the product **in relation to the outside temperature**. So, the higher the SEER and EER, the more efficiently your air conditioner will operate.

Both SEER and EER are included in ENERGY STAR specifications because each rating indicates the energy efficiency of the product under different conditions. SEER rating more accurately reflects overall system efficiency on a seasonal basis and EER reflects the system's energy efficiency at peak-day operations. Both ratings are important when choosing a product.

Think of SEER and EER in terms of gas mileage for your vehicle — the higher the average MPG, the better the fuel economy. So, the higher the SEER and EER numbers, the higher the efficiency — and the greater your energy savings!

When purchasing a new air conditioner or central air system, NPU recommends you look for the following SEER/EER rating for maximum energy efficiency:

STYLE	SEER/EER Rating:
Room (window) A/C units	13 or greater
Residential Central Air Systems (5.4 ton capacity or less)	15 or greater
Commercial Central Air Systems (greater than 5.4 ton capacity)	Call NPU

All new room air conditioners are NOT the same, but they all display bright yellow EnergyGuide labels with energy efficiency information. EnergyGuide labels are mandated by Congress as part of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975. The label displays an energy efficiency rating (EER) in large black numbers. Remember — higher ratings mean higher efficiency.

As of January 2006, all ENERGY STAR room air conditioners sold in the United States must have a SEER of at least 13. These units use at least 10% less energy than conventional units. But buyer beware! Less efficient A/C units with lower SEER/EER ratings are still available. While cheaper, these units will cost you more in electricity in the long run. They are also NOT qualified for rebates under NPU's efficiency programs. To help you compare units, a range for competing air room conditioners of the same cooling capacity is printed on the EnergyGuide label below the EER.

Source: www.hvacmechanic.com/energy/energy.htm

Energy Tips: Keep cool with air movement and ventilation

Fans use less energy than air conditioning and may provide enough comfort, unless there is high humidity. By comparison, a fan only uses 10% of the electricity used by a room air conditioner. That can make a BIG difference in your energy cost!

Ceiling fans. Ceiling fans cool by creating a low-level "wind chill" effect throughout a room. As long as indoor humidity isn't too high, fans can be very effective. Just remember that a fan cools people — but still uses electricity — so turn it off when you leave the room. Look for ENERGY STAR-rated ceiling fans.

House fans. Installing a large fan in your top-floor ceiling is a very effective way of cooling the whole house down without

using central A/C. These fans circulate air through the house, inducing a strong draft in rooms with open windows. For the greatest cooling effect, run fans when the outside air is cooler. Check with your local home improvement retailer about available products and installation.

Save more. Use less. One of the best ways to save energy dollars is to use less air conditioning. Each degree you lower your thermostat will increase your energy use by 3 to 4%. For instance, setting your thermostat at 73 instead of 68 in the summer could mean up to a 20% in energy savings!

Tips for additional energy savings:

- Don't place heat-producing appliances like lights or TVs near an A/C thermostat; it will sense the heat and run longer

- Use fans with air conditioners; this allows the cool air to spread more effectively
- Limit the use of heat-producing appliances like dishwashers and ovens
- Don't run a dehumidifier while an air conditioner is running; it will actually cause the air conditioner to work harder

Source: [American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy www.aceee.org/consumerguide/cooling.htm](http://www.aceee.org/consumerguide/cooling.htm)

Want to Learn More? Call us first!

Contact the NPU Energy Efficiency team:
Jeff Brining, Director of Energy Efficiency Programs; Fawn Walker, Commercial Efficiency Coordinator; Jeanne Kurasz, Residential Efficiency Coordinator at 860-823-4514 or visit www.norwichpublicutilities.com
You can also email us at efficiencymatters@npumail.com