Programmable Thermostat Tip Sheet

A helpful way to control heating and cooling usage – the biggest energy costs many homeowners and businesses incur – is by using a programmable thermostat to preset room temperatures throughout the day, so you don't need to manually adjust them.

Here are answers to common questions to help make programmable thermostats work for you.

Q. How do they work?

A. Programmable thermostats help regulate indoor temperatures by letting you easily pre-determine at various points during the day. You might, for instance, set room temperatures at 68 degrees during the workday and drop it down to 60 degrees at night, when nobody is around. Some thermostats let you pre-program up to six different temperatures throughout the day and include extra handy features, such as voice and phone programming and various alerts.

Q. How much do they cost?

A. Programmable thermostats generally cost under $200. Hiring a professional to install it may add another $50 to $100. (Many utilities, however, offer rebates on programmable thermostats that can greatly lower the costs.)

Q. How much can you save using one?

A. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, using a programmable thermostat to set back the temperature 10 to 15 degrees Fahrenheit for eight hours during a 24-hour period can save roughly 10% on heating and cooling bills – or up to 1% savings for every degree room temperature is turned back.

How much you save, of course, depends on how much you turn down the temps and for how long.

Q. Are there any limitations?

A. The type of heating system you use may affect the type of thermostat you purchase and whether a programmable one is the best option. To learn more, read this primer from the Department of Energy:
http://www.energysavers.gov/your_home/space_heating_cooling/index.cfm/mytopic=127 20

Have questions or need help? Call Energy Smart at (651)292-4652.