

# Vacations and Your Home's Electric Usage

Summer is here and many of us are thinking of taking vacations. Electric consumers frequently ask why their bill is so high when they are away from home all day or have left for a week's vacation.

Lifestyle and size of the family determines the amount of energy used, rather than the quantity of time spent in the home. People who are gone all day use greater amounts of electricity in shorter periods of time; when an individual stays home all day, the electrical usage is spread over the day. For example, there is little difference in the amount of laundry or cooking required for a family that remains home compared to a family gone all or part of the day.

Pre-vacation activities may include house cleaning, extra clothes washing, etc. There is a repeat of this activity when the vacationer returns with clothes to be washed and countless other chores to be performed with the aid of electrical appliances.

Many people have the misconception they can turn their thermostats off, leave the house for a week or two and their electric bill will drop drastically. That simply isn't the case.

A vacant house will not use much less energy than an occupied house. It should be remembered that appliances such as furnaces, water heaters, refrigerators, freezers, clocks and instant-on televisions will continue to operate through automatic controls. They require little attention and are often forgotten by consumers. In contrast, we pay attention to the lights because they are manually operated by a switch.

If you plan to leave your house for an extended period of time, we recommend you turn up thermostats (for summer), remembering that higher settings do not eliminate all usage. Disconnect, whenever possible, such things as televisions, well pumps and water heaters, remembering to drain all water lines when necessary.

Please remember to let the billing department know if you need your bill forwarded to a temporary address if you plan on being gone for any length of time. Call 505-832-4483 or in state long distance 1-800-339-2521 for the billing department.

Also, to help you determine your usage period, the reading dates and number of days in that billing cycle are printed on the left central area of your bill. As always, we welcome your comments or questions.

Have a great summer.