

# COLUMBUS CURRENTS

## How Extreme Winter Weather Impacts Reliability

By Maura Giles

When outdoor temperatures drop, our electricity use increases. That's because we're doing more activities inside, and our heating systems are running longer and more often to counteract colder outdoor temperatures. Factor in that we all tend to use electricity at the same times—in the morning and early evenings—and that equals a lot of strain on our electric grid.

At Columbus Electric Cooperative we work closely with our local generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative in resource and infrastructure planning to ensure you have the power you need whenever you flip a switch, but the electric grid is much larger than your local co-op and G&T.

Columbus Electric Cooperative and our G&T take proactive steps to create a resilient portion of the grid and ensure electric reliability in extreme weather, including regular system maintenance, grid modernization efforts and disaster response planning; but it takes everyone to keep the grid reliable.

To help keep the heat on for you, your family and neighbors, here are a few things you can do to relieve pressure on the grid (and save a little money along the way):

1. Select the lowest comfortable thermostat setting and turn it down several degrees whenever possible. Your heating system must run longer to make up the difference between the thermostat temp and the outdoor temp.

**Pro tip:** Seal air leaks around windows and exterior doors with caulk and weatherstripping. Air leaks and drafts force your heating system to work harder than necessary

2. Stagger your use of major appliances such as dishwashers, ovens and dryers.

**Pro tip:** Start the dishwasher before you go to bed and use smaller countertop appliances like slow cookers and air fryers to save energy.

3. Ensure that your heating system is optimized for efficiency with regular maintenance and proper insulation.

**Pro tip:** Make sure your furnace filter isn't clogged and dirty. Replace it as needed.

4. When possible, use cold water to reduce water heating costs.

**Pro tip:** Setting your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees can help you save energy and reduce mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes.

5. Unplug devices when not in use to eliminate unnecessary energy use. Even when turned off, electronics in standby mode consume energy.

**Pro tip:** Plug devices into a power strip so you can turn them all off at once with the push of a button.

As we face the challenges posed by winter weather, understanding its impact on energy demand is crucial for maintaining a reliable power supply. By adopting energy conservation practices during periods of extreme cold, not only can you save money on your electric bills, but you can also each contribute to the resilience of the power grid, keeping our local community warm and connected.

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BEST BETS FOR

# Winter Savings

Energy consumption spikes during winter months as we spend more time indoors and heating systems work overtime. You can help reduce demand and strain on the electric grid by conserving during peak energy times. Reducing energy use will also help lower your energy bills.

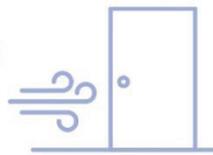
## UNPLUG WHEN POSSIBLE

Turn off unnecessary lights and electronics when you aren't using them.



## ELIMINATE DRAFTS AND AIR LEAKS

Seal air leaks and drafts around windows and exterior doors.



## USE APPLIANCES WHEN ENERGY DEMAND IS LOWER

Run large appliances like clothes washers, dryers and dishwashers early in the morning or before you go to bed.



## MAINTAIN HEATING EQUIPMENT

Maintain your heating system by replacing dirty, clogged filters and scheduling an annual inspection for necessary maintenance.



## LOWER THE THERMOSTAT

Home heating accounts for a large portion of energy consumption. Adjust your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting (68 degrees or lower).



## Government-In-Action Youth Tour

Applications for the 2024 Government in Action Youth Tour are now being accepted for the 2024 once in a lifetime trip to Washington, D.C. Next year's trip is scheduled for June 17-21, 2024.

Each year Columbus Electric Cooperative sponsors two high school students from our service area to attend the all-expense paid trip to learn about our nation's history, meet with members of congress and learn about electric cooperatives. Applications may be obtained by contacting our office, the student's high school counselor or

at [columbusco-op.org](http://columbusco-op.org)  
The deadline to apply is January 31, 2024

### Board Highlights

The Board of Trustees approved the 2024 budget at the December meeting as well as continued participation in the Tri-State Efficiency Program, which provides rebates to our members. The monthly financial and operational reports were also approved.

### Operation Round-Up

Make the commitment to give back to your community this year by signing up for Operation Round Up with Columbus Electric Cooperative. Operation Round Up rounds up your monthly bill to the next highest dollar amount making a donation to our scholarship fund. All donations are tax deductible. Sign up today at [columbusco-op.org/operation-round](http://columbusco-op.org/operation-round) or call us at 1-800-950-2667.



Don't miss your chance to apply!

Columbus Electric Cooperative offers educational scholarships to active members of CEC and their immediate family members. Scholarship recipients can receive financial assistance for up to eight semesters of undergraduate studies at the college of their choice. Applicants must complete an application and submit letters of recommendation. Applications may be obtained by contacting our office, the student's high school counselor or at [columbusco-op.org/scholarships](http://columbusco-op.org/scholarships). The deadline to apply for the 2024-2025 academic school year is March 4, 2024.

For questions, please call our office at 575-546-8838

### ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

During winter months, ensure your home is well sealed to reduce the need for excessive heating. Seal air leaks around your home and add insulation where needed to save up to 10% on annual energy bills.

Install weather stripping on exterior doors and apply caulk around windows. Check attic insulation levels and hire a qualified contractor if additional insulation is required.

Source: [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov)



Emergency Response Number  
1-800-228-0579

Toll - free Office Number  
1-800-950-COOP (2667)



[www.columbusco-op.org](http://www.columbusco-op.org)