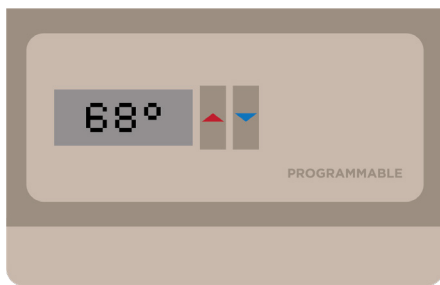


Upgrading Your Thermostat to Save on Utilities

As it gets colder, most of us see our utility bills rise due to increased energy usage. One way to get a handle on these costs is to set the thermostat to 68 degrees during the day. According to the Department of Energy, **lowering the set temperature by 7-10 degrees for 8 hours a day can save you 10% on your energy bills!** You can do this at night with a manual thermostat. However, you have to remember to adjust it every day and night.

Upgrading to a programmable or smart thermostat can result in a measurable savings on your energy bill because you don't have to remember to adjust it. It can also adjust the temperature when you are not at home, unlike a manual thermostat.

What is the difference between a programmable thermostat and a smart thermostat?



Programmable Thermostats:

- Let you program a schedule. If your schedule is similar every day, it can adjust the temperatures automatically.
- Don't require you to remember to make adjustments. They'll reduce the temperatures at night or while you're at work as long as you program them to do so! These programmed adjustments can save you money on utilities!

BUT ...

- You actually have to program it! Reportedly, 80% of programmable thermostats are never used to their full potential because homeowners don't get around to customizing the program to their schedule.



Smart Thermostats:

- Can be controlled remotely.
- Adjust themselves to your preferences and schedule, saving you money on utilities.
- Allow you to track your energy usage.
- Sometimes come with geofencing. This feature tracks your location via your phone and adjusts the thermostat accordingly.

BUT ...

- These thermostats can be more complicated to select and set up.
- Smart thermostats tend to be more expensive initially.

Let's Take a Closer Look at Smart Thermostats ...

*There are many choices when selecting a smart thermostat.
Here are some factors to consider:*

Type of Heating System

Different smart thermostats work with different types of heating/cooling systems. Check for compatibility of the smart thermostat with your system. Factors that can affect your choice include: forced air heat, radiators, a heat pump, air conditioning, and humidifiers.

Type of Wiring

Most smart thermostats need a "C" wire to provide power for all the smart functions. If you only have a furnace with no air conditioning, you may only have 2 wires going to your current thermostat. In this case it would be necessary to have an electrician to install the additional wiring needed to run your smart thermostat.

Installation

If you decide to upgrade your thermostat, you can do it yourself or hire a professional. Especially for a smart thermostat, make sure that you have the proper wiring to support the new thermostat. Keep your old thermostat around until you are sure that the new one is working properly. When it comes time to dispose of the old one, take it to the Los Alamos EcoStation. Old thermostats may contain mercury and should be disposed of with the Household Hazardous Waste program.

Ease of Use

Some of the smart systems available are simple to use, but have less manual options. Others let you control everything but are harder to set up. Also consider compatibility with any existing smart systems, such as Alexa or Google Assistant..

Remote Sensors

Some smart thermostats have remote movement or temperature sensors for other rooms.

Number of Zones

Just like with conventional thermostats, if you have more than one heating/cooling zone, you will need a separate smart thermostat for each zone.

Do you want more tips on saving money on utilities this winter?

Scan the QR code for tips from the Department of Public Utilities. Also check out PEEC's website for winterizing tips for your home at peecnature.org/home-winterization



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