

## Include home energy savings in summer vacation plans

**G**oing on vacation this summer? Make sure your home's energy use takes a vacation as well. Simple tips can save you money while you're away.

### Air Conditioning

Set the thermostat to 85 degrees. If it is a programmable thermostat, use the "hold" or the "vacation" setting to keep it at that temperature.

### Electronics

Computers, CD/DVD players, TVs, and VCRs – these and other electronic appliances use electricity, even when they are not turned on. Unplug them before leaving.

### Lighting

Consumers can improve their energy savings, and their home's security, by using timers to operate lights each night. And by installing compact fluorescent bulbs, or CFLs, in those lamps, consumers will be saving more energy, up to 66 percent less in each lamp, and the bulb will last approximately 10 times longer than a regular incandescent bulb.

### Water Heating

Turn the water heater's temperature down to the lowest setting. Many water heaters have a "vacation" setting for this purpose. Leave a reminder to turn it back up upon returning home.

- Waterbed owners should unplug the heater, or at least lower the temperature 10 degrees.
- Pool owners should shorten the operating time for the pool filter and automatic cleaning sweep (if applicable). A pool cover can save energy too. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, up to 70 percent of pool heat loss is by evaporation.

### Refrigerator

Adjust the refrigerator control to a warmer setting. If going on an extended trip, consider emptying the fridge and turning it off. Remember to leave the door open to prevent mildew.

# Thunderstorm Safety Tips

**T**he thunderstorm season is here! We would like to remind you of some important safety tips to keep in mind whenever Mother Nature strikes. Although seemingly less dangerous, lightning kills more people per year than either tornados or hurricanes and causes billions of dollars in damage.

- ◆ Do not use a phone during a storm. Use a cell phone or a cordless phone to make emergency calls.
- ◆ Turn off and unplug appliances well before a storm nears – not during.
- ◆ Stay away from electrical outlets, appliances, computers, power tools and TV sets.
- ◆ Avoid water and contact with piping, including sinks, baths and faucets.
- ◆ Lightning can strike up to 10 miles from the area in which it is raining. This means that if you can hear thunder, you're within striking distance. A good idea is to use the 30-30 Rule. According to this rule, if you count less than 30 seconds between a lightning flash and the thunder following it, you should seek shelter from the storm.
- ◆ Stay away from tall, solitary trees or canopies
- ◆ Do not stand near power, light or flag poles, machinery, fences, gates, metal bleachers, or even other people. If you are in a group, spread out so that you are at least twenty feet apart.
- ◆ If you are outside and your skin tingles or you hear crackling sounds, this could signal that lightning is about to strike. Drop immediately into a crouching position and make yourself as small as possible with minimal contact with the ground.
- ◆ If a person is struck by lightning, call 911 and care for the victim immediately. You are not in danger of being electrocuted by the victim.



Source: [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org)

*Lucky Day? A group of local fisherman were en route to find shelter from an approaching thunderstorm when their boat was struck by lightning conducted through a fishing pole in the back of their boat. The sky above them was clear when the lightning bolt struck. The man on the right is holding a can of oil that was touching the fishing pole.*