

Summer tips: for thermostat, appliances & pool

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Seasonal adjustments can lower operating costs, extend life of home systems

Summer months provide an opportune time for homeowners to extend the life of their home operating systems while achieving energy conservation, according to the Home Warranty Association of California, which has issued a checklist of tips to achieve these goals. The group's tips are as follows:

Cooling system:



- Adjust thermostats. Typical settings are 78 degrees for summer cooling and 70 degrees for winter heating. Operating costs increase 3-8 percent for each degree a thermostat is lowered.
- Draw drapes and blinds during hot days and make sure furniture and drapes don't block the airflow from the air conditioner.
- Minimize the use of heat-generating appliances such as ranges and dryers.
- Take advantage of cooler summer evenings by opening windows.
- Clean or replace heating and air-conditioning filters once a month and service the entire unit once a year.
- Avoid undermining the effectiveness of the air conditioner by letting direct sunlight heat into your home while the unit is trying to cool it.
- If the air doesn't feel cool enough, the air filter may be clogged, the registers may not be allowing air to flow or the thermostat may be set too high.

Clothes dryer:

- Run dryer loads consecutively.
- Run clothes through an extra spin cycle in the washing machine to save money by lessening the time it takes to dry the clothes. It costs less to run the washing machine than it does to run the dryer.
- Run such heavy-use appliances as the clothes dryer after 7 PM, when peak use times are over.

Pool and spa:

A dirty filter is the most common cause of problems associated with pool or spa equipment. If the filter is dirty, it can prevent the proper cleaning of the pool or spa and prevent the heater from working efficiently.