



Whenever you replace any electric appliance—large or small—be sure to select the most energy-efficient model that meets your needs.

# Many Ways To Save

**AN ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOME IS A COMFORTABLE HOME.** For greater comfort and savings, make changes to your home in these areas:

## Air Sealing

Sealing gaps is one of the quickest ways to make your home more comfortable and efficient. Reducing wasted airflow can pay off in as little as one year. Caulking and weatherstripping are two simple and effective techniques. Caulk is generally used for openings between stationary components, such as around door and window frames. Weatherstripping is used to seal components that move, such as doors and windows.

## Reset Water Heater Thermostat

Most water heaters will heat water to a set temperature and then hold it there. This means that all day and night, the water heater cycles on and off, just maintaining that set temperature. Lowering the setting a few degrees can mean big savings. And chances are that turning down the water temperature won't even be noticeable when you turn on the tap.

## Programmable Thermostat

It seems obvious, but just like the water heater maintains a set temperature even when it isn't being used, a thermostat does the same thing for the entire house. Just letting it cool off (or warm up) when there isn't anyone home or awake can save energy and money, as well. Without sacrificing comfort, it can also save close to half of what air sealing would save you. This change usually pays for itself in about three years.

## Attic and Wall Insulation

The greater the difference between the indoor and the outdoor temperatures, the more energy it takes to maintain a comfortable temperature in your home. Adding insulation between the indoors and the outdoors reduces that energy demand. Depending on where you live, the savings from insulating your walls and attic could be almost double the savings of air sealing. This upgrade pays back in 3½ to 12 years.

## Replace Your Refrigerator

Much like a water heater, a refrigerator holds a set temperature that is very different from the air outside of it. It makes sense that a better-sealed, better-insulated refrigerator with better mechanical systems would save more energy. Depending on your previous model, a new Energy Star-certified refrigerator can save up to \$150 per year. One way to test the seal on your refrigerator is to close a dollar bill in the door. If the bill drops when you close the door and let go, you may want to consider fixing the seal or getting a new one. A new energy-efficient refrigerator may pay for itself within 10 years—well under the average lifespan of the appliance. Replacing a damaged seal will pay for itself very quickly.

## Water Heaters and Furnaces

The savings from water heaters and furnaces depend a lot on where the house is and what the fuel is. If you live in a cold climate or a warmer one, a new high-efficiency furnace could rival or exceed air sealing for its potential savings. In warmer areas, a high-efficiency heat pump may be the best choice for the home.

# Breaker Box Safety Basics

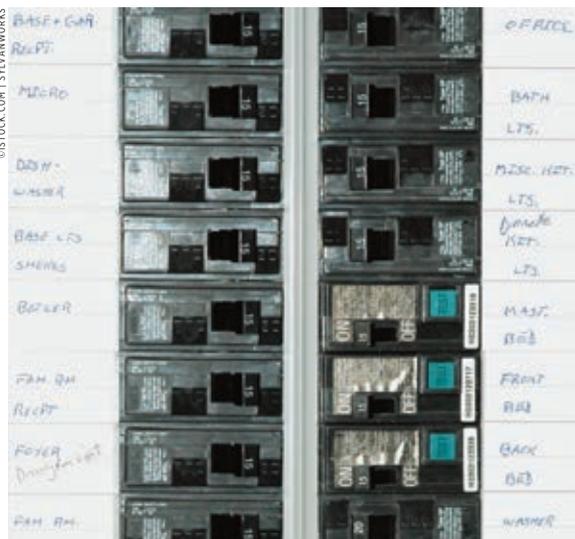
**WE USE ELECTRICITY IN OUR HOMES THROUGHOUT THE DAY**, but we rarely think about how it gets to the wall outlets or switches. Distribution lines bring electricity to homes and most commonly connect to a house through a service drop. The electricity goes through the meter box to the service panel, which is typically found in a basement or garage. The service panel, often called a breaker box, is where breakers and fuses protect the wires inside your house from electrical overload.

With so much electricity funneling out of the breaker box through the rest of the home to your outlets and switches, it is important to not only know how to use a breaker box, but also how to do so safely.

AFCIs—arc-fault circuit interrupters—are installed directly in newer breaker boxes, and are designed to protect against fires caused by arcing faults in home electrical wiring.

Arcing faults can be triggered by overloaded circuits, damaged wires, cracked wire insulation, loose or improper connections, faulty electrical equipment and overheated electrical wires.

An AFCI monitors current flow and can distinguish between normal, working arcs and unwanted, dangerous arcs. When an unwanted arcing condition is detected, it shuts down the circuit. It is important to note that AFCIs do not provide protection against all of the possible circuit faults that can cause fires,



**Clearly labeling breakers will allow you to quickly shut off or reset the correct one when needed.**

but they are a significant step forward in electrical fire safety. If your breaker box does not feature AFCIs, contact a qualified electrician to have them installed.

If an appliance is malfunctioning, if there is another electrical malfunction in your home, or if the circuit breaker tripped during a power outage, it may be necessary to cut off or switch on the power at the breaker box. If you must flip a switch at the breaker box, always remember to step away and look away as you do so. You want to protect your eyes and body just in case an arc should occur.

Never attempt to turn off power at the breaker box if you must stand in water to do so. If you touch the breaker box while standing in water, it could cause electric shock or death. If you cannot reach your breaker box safely, call your electric utility to shut off power at the meter.

Be sure to call a qualified electrician or your landlord if blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers are a recurring problem. This means there is something wrong with your electrical system, and it needs to be inspected.

SafeElectricity.org



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Operating in Brown, Callahan, Coleman, Coke, Concho, Runnels, Taylor and Tom Green counties

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## Power Tip

**Did you know that 90 percent of the energy used to operate a washing machine comes from using hot water?**

**A simple switch from hot to cold can save a great deal of energy. Also, consider air-drying to save even more household energy.**