

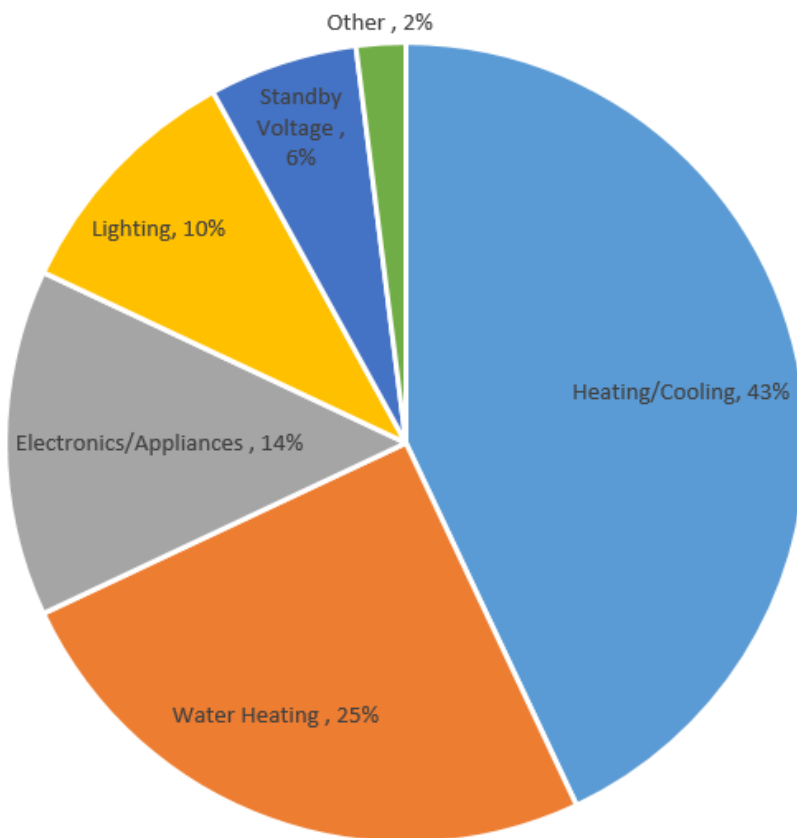
From simple DIYs to factors outside of your control, here's what you need to know about fighting your rising electricity bills.

If you think your electricity bills keep getting more expensive, you're not going crazy. According to data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), [the average American household uses 867 kWh](#) a month and pays [an average price of 13.12 cents per kWh](#). The average cost per kilowatt hour (kwh) in Tennessee is 10.5 cents – **Morristown Utilities cost per kwh is 9.2cents (rates effective as of October 1, 2018).**

While it's hard enough dealing with an expensive bill, it's even more difficult to prepare for these unpredictable spikes in your budget. Unlike your mortgage or insurance payment, your electricity bills can be higher or lower from one month to the next, and weather is a big factor.

So how can you finally lower your home's electricity bills for good? You have to learn what's to blame for your high energy bills in the first place.

Average Residential Usage Breakdown



6 Reasons Your Electricity Bill Could be so High (and What You Can Do to Lower It)

Even though many of the factors contributing to your electricity bill are within your control, there are others you simply can't change. If you're suffering from high electricity bills, it may be because:

1. Your Appliances and Light Bulbs Aren't Energy Efficient

Since appliances account for one of the biggest chunks of your electricity bill, it's crucial that you're not running old clunkers when you should be upgrading to energy-efficient models instead.

That [Energy Star logo is more than a cute design](#) on your washing machine or dishwasher.

They may cost a few bucks more than traditional machines, but Energy Star appliances use less energy to get the job done just as well (or better!) than their other electricity-zapping counterparts.

Appliances with the Energy Star logo let consumers know they're making a conscious choice to use less electricity and lower their energy bills.

The same goes for all the light bulbs in your house.

If you're still using traditional incandescent bulbs, you're way behind the times.

LED lights use 80–90% less energy, provide better bright light, and last pretty much forever.

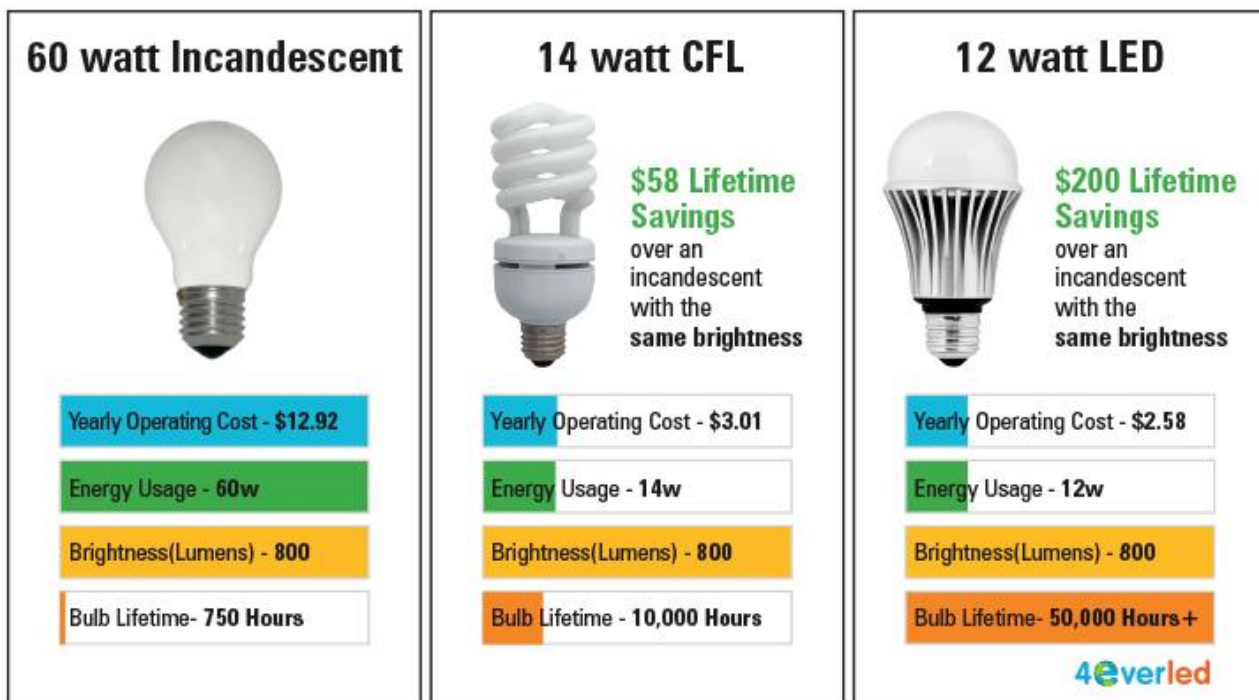


Image source: [Cooler Concord](#)

LEDs used to be out of most homeowner's budgets, but now they're more affordable and only cost pennies more than other bulbs. You won't find better lifetime savings for the small upfront expense.

Lower your electricity bill by: Upgrading all your appliances to Energy Star rated models. Switch out your old bulbs as they burn out for new LEDs, or replace your 5 most-used bulbs today.

2. Your Home May Need a Serious Insulation Overhaul

Another majority of your electric bill gets routed to heating and cooling your home.

So if your home's not properly insulated, all the money you spend on heating and cooling will be going right out your vintage windows and drafty attic space. That means you have to spend more time and money to work your unit harder just to get to the temperature you want.

Lower your electricity bill by: Replacing all the old windows and doors in your home with well-fitting, multi-pane choices. You can always install weather-stripping around your doors and windows too. Check out this handy guide from Energy.gov to [find out how much insulation your home needs](#).

3. Weather

Since close to **half** of your home's electricity costs stem from your heating and cooling expenses, extreme weather conditions can cause major damage to your wallet. Since you're not in control of the weather, it's best to program your thermostat to safeguard against spikes in your energy consumption like these. Raise your thermostat just one degree in the summer and you could save 3% on your electricity costs. Lower it one degree in the winter and that savings jumps to an average of 5%.

Lower your electricity bill by: Programming your thermostat to 78°F in the summer and 68°F in the winter. Bundle in layers or hang out in your swimsuit when temperatures become extreme before changing the thermostat.

4. Your Water Heater May Need Some Attention

You can run hot water from your tap in under 30 seconds because your water heater is constantly warming the water in the tank. Even though you may not be using the hot water, your heater will always get close to the temperature you set. But you may not need your water temperature set so high. Lowering the temperature of your water heater saves money because you don't need as much electricity to maintain that high heat. You can also give your water heater an insulation jacket and add insulation to the outside of the pipes to keep the temperature (and your savings) locked in.

Lower your electricity bill by: Lowering the temperature of your water heater to 120°F and adding extra insulation to maintain that temperature efficiently. Check out this Energy Savings Project video from the US Department of Energy (DOE) to learn [how to insulate your water heater tank on your own](#).

5. You're Keeping Too Many Devices in Standby Mode and Summoning the Phantom Power Vampires

When you turn off your computer, DVR, PlayStation, and other devices, they usually go into standby mode — instead of completely powering off — when they're plugged in. But your devices aren't asleep during standby. They're regularly performing updates, downloading content, and wasting energy while you're not using them. Your devices don't sleep. They're regularly performing updates, downloading content, and wasting energy. Blame phantom power draws from devices still plugged in for [over 10% of your power bill](#), according to the DOE.

4 Tips to Keep Your Energy Bill from Haunting You (U.S. Department of Energy)

Don't think those vampire drains are enough to worry about? The Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory compiled a [list of how much energy devices consume while in standby](#) mode.

The data shows that when plugged in, a:

- Desktop computer will draw 21.13 watts in sleep mode and 2.84 watts when off
- USB hub uses just as much energy on (2.06 watts) as it does when off (1.44 watts)

Lower your electricity bill by: Plugging your devices into power strips over individual outlets. Instead of having to unplug everything or crawl behind heavy furniture, simply turn off the power strip and unplug that.

As Alina Bradford writes for CNET, you can [test your home for vampire or leaking energy](#).

Bradford says turn off your AC or heating unit and hot water heater. Then turn off everything else in your home, but leave it all plugged in. Now head to your electric meter box. See the numbers still going up? You shouldn't see any energy consumption, in theory, so if you do, that means you have a few vampire devices draining your electricity (and wallet!). There are also plug-in devices available on the market to measure your home's energy usage if you're struggling to identify these vampires on your own.

6. You're Not Running Your Appliances Efficiently

Confused about your high electricity bills even after switching to Energy Star appliances?

You may not be maintaining or running them efficiently enough to notice supreme energy savings.

Many people simply forget to clean their appliances. But just like your vacuum works overtime when it's clogged with dust and grime, your appliances have to work harder when they're not maintained as well.

When your appliances have to work harder, they're going to use more energy.

Lower your electricity bill by: Following these best practices for running your appliances without running up your bill:

- Always change your AC air filters
- Clean your fridge's condenser coils
- Line/air dry your laundry once a week (or more)
- Always wash/dry a full load of clothes
- Turn off the heated dry setting on your dishwasher
- Install a dimmer switch on your lights
- Keep your fridge and freezer full, but not crowded
- Always clean the lint trap in your dryer

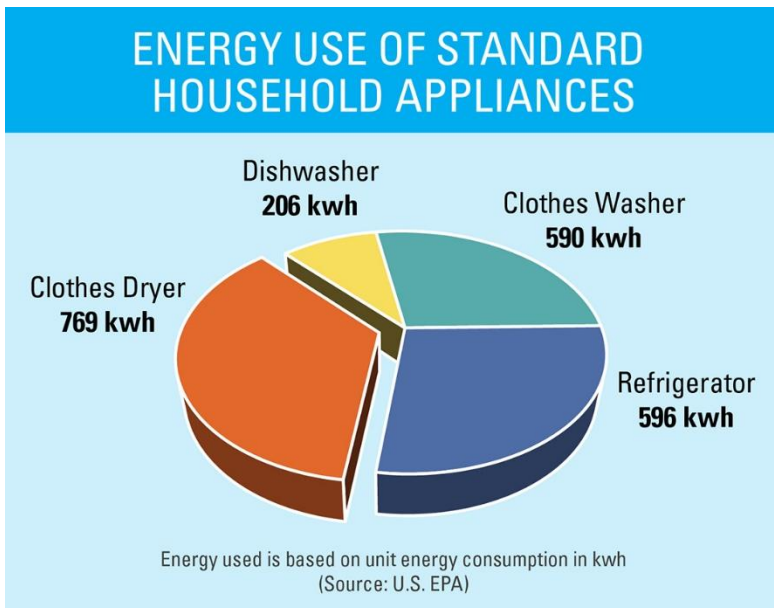


Image source: [EPA](#)

Heat Pump 101

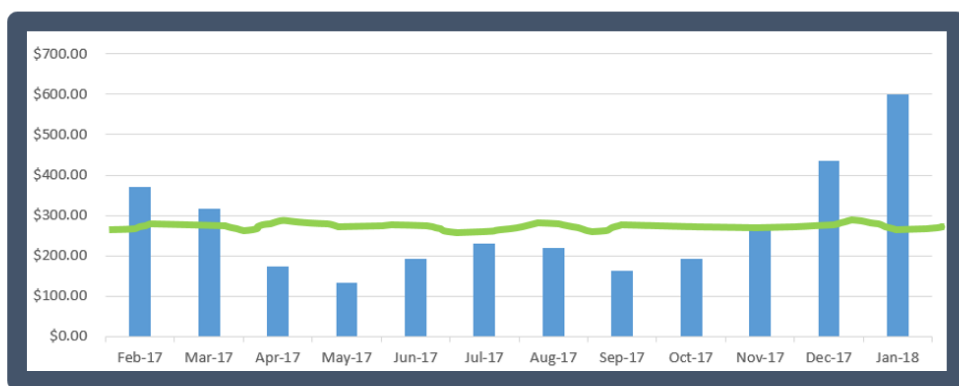
1. **Defrost mode** can be alarming! But, it's crucial for heat pump operation in winter. Ice may begin to form on your outdoor components when the temperature drops below freezing. So, your heat pump will reverse operation to defrost those components. But, this will only be for a short while and is completely normal.
2. But, if it seems like **defrost mode may be kicking on too frequently or lasting too long...** make sure you call a local heating and air contractor. While defrost mode is a normal part of operation, anything that seems excessive or out of the ordinary, should be looked into by a professional.
3. DO NOT rely on **emergency heat** for really cold days. This can really drive up utility bills, and is most definitely not the most efficient allocation of heating energy.

4. Make things **programmable**. This way you don't have to worry about constantly monitoring your thermostat. When you have your new heat pump installed, ask your contractor about a programmable thermostat.
5. Like all other systems, make sure that you are paying attention to your **filter**. Replace the filter regularly. This will make sure that the air you are receiving from your heat pump during the winter is premium quality.
6. Try to **schedule a tune-up** at least once a year to make sure that your heat pump is in peak condition for the heating and cooling season. Remember, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!
7. Lastly, **clear winter debris** from around your heat pump to prevent blocked airflow. Decreased airflow means decreased efficiency.

How Can Morristown Utilities Help???

MUS offers additional information on its website related to energy efficiency. Check it out http://www.musfiber.net/customer_service/energy_efficiency.php

MUS also offers leveled billing.



Take the surprise out of your monthly utility bill
 Get **LEVELIZED BILLING AT MUS** 

Living on a budget? Would having your utility bill be about the same every month help you stay within your budget? Consider MUS's Levelized Billing Program.

Levelized billing averages your bills for the last 12 months on a continuous basis. Averaging your bill smooths out the extreme seasonal variations, both highs and lows, to produce a more levelized amount each month. The bill will not be of the exact same amount, but it will vary only slightly within a few dollars as it adjusts to the extreme seasonal fluctuations. The calmer months of the year absorb the extreme variations to create your levelized bill.

Who qualifies for Levelized Billing?

- Available to residential customers only
- Account must have a zero balance to enroll
- Account must have 12 months history at that location

More details and application is available on our website http://www.musfiber.net/customer_service/levelized_billing.php