

# TIPS FOR REDUCING UTILITY BILLS DURING WARMER MONTHS

*In the last few years, we have experienced some of the hottest summers on record. Air conditioning is one of the largest uses of electricity in a house. If your air conditioner is running 24/7, some of your highest electric bills of the year will occur between June and September. Installing a pool will result in an increase in electric (and water) usage. Extreme heat and dry conditions can also lead to an increase in water usage for landscaping.*

*Tips to Reduce Higher Usage: Set your thermostat as high as comfortably possible in the summer, ideally 78°F or higher, and keep your house warmer than normal when your family is away. Insulation isn't just for the cold winter months. Preventing air leaks is one of the best ways to keep warm air out and cool air in. Close your drapes during the day. Water landscaping during cooler times of the day to reduce water usage. Please also consider:*



## UTILITY BILL REVIEW

First, look closely at the utility bill to determine where the increase has occurred. The utility bill contains the amount owed for electric, water, sewer, and the refuse/recycling fee. In most cases, the increase in charges is a result of a higher usage in electricity or water. During extremely hot periods in the summer months, air conditioning, poor insulation, and pool filters/heaters can result in higher electric usage. Watering lawns and landscaping during dry periods will also increase the amount of water used.

## UTILITY INSIGHT PROGRAM

The Utility Insight program can help determine which utility is causing the excess usage. Customers can review a current bill summary with usages broken down by electric, water and sewer. The program allows a customer to view their daily usage, review their monthly billing and usage history, and provides a projection of their next bill. Electric or water usage can be compared with temperature data to see how usage changes daily or monthly. The data is displayed in an easy to read chart or table format.

After creating a Utility Insight account, customers can complete a series of questions about their home that can help them understand their energy and water usage. Answers are used to provide better recommendations for reducing usage and saving money. A personal savings plan can be created based off the completed profile & customized recommendations. Users can then keep track of projects, create a to-do list of the energy and water saving actions they plan to do, mark off which tasks they've already completed, and see estimates of how much their efforts can save. To create an account, visit [www.bgohio.org](http://www.bgohio.org).

## EFFICIENCY SMART

Efficiency Smart helps customers save on their electric bills and make their homes more comfortable. Efficiency Smart offers discounts and rebates for the purchase of qualifying energy-efficient products as well as advice on how residents can reduce their electric bills. Residents have access to free energy-efficiency guidance specific to their home, an online home energy assessment tool to identify ways to save energy in their home, and an electric usage monitor to measure how much energy their household items use. For a complete list of services available through Efficiency Smart, visit [www.efficiencysmart.org/bowling-green-ohio](http://www.efficiencysmart.org/bowling-green-ohio) or call 877-889-3777.

## COLUMBIA GAS HOME ENERGY AUDIT

Columbia Gas customers, residing in Bowling Green, are eligible for a Home Energy Audit at a discounted rate. A Certified Home Energy Auditor will evaluate the home, and customers will receive free energy saving products, a safety check of their furnace, an infrared scan to detect existing insulation levels, and a personalized energy report. After the audit, the customer will receive rebates based on recommendations. Customers pay no more than \$300 for all recommended improvements (such as attic insulation, wall insulation, and air sealing) installed by a participating program contractor. To schedule an appointment, call 1-877-644-6674 or visit [www.columbiagasohio.com/everyroommatters](http://www.columbiagasohio.com/everyroommatters).

## BUDGET PAYMENT PLAN

The City offers a budget payment plan option. The budget amount is calculated based on the total 12 months of utility bills divided by 12 months to arrive at a monthly budget payment. Budget amounts are recalculated semi-annually.

## MUNI-PAL & OTHER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Muni-Pal is a program in cooperation with the Salvation Army. When you donate to Muni-Pal, the money goes directly to the Salvation Army office in Bowling Green to help Bowling Green residents, in need of assistance, to pay their utility bill. You can make a onetime contribution, or an additional charge can be placed on your monthly bill. Residents who need assistance paying their bill should contact the Salvation Army at 419-352-5918.

In addition to the Muni-Pal program administered by the Salvation Army, residents may be eligible for assistance through the Great Lakes Community Action Partnership (GLCAP). Residents may begin their application by calling 567-432-5046. Wood County Area Ministries may also be able to help and can be reached at 419-352-1322. If children live in the home, customers should also contact Wood County Jobs & Family Services at 419-352-7566.



Residents are encouraged to contact the Utility Business Office at [bgutil@bgohio.org](mailto:bgutil@bgohio.org) or call 419-354-6252 with any questions. The City can help residents analyze their bill, work through possible causes of high usage, and help answer questions about available programs.