

Get the most from your zonal electric heat

How to stay comfortable and save energy

Zonal heating systems — including baseboard heat, wall heaters and radiant heat (such as ceiling heat) — are affordable to install and can heat your home efficiently. They allow you to enjoy both comfort and energy savings because you can heat each zone or room of your home to the temperature you want and turn off the heat in unoccupied areas. **Follow these guidelines for top efficiency and comfort.** *Many tips apply to portable space heaters as well.*



Check mechanical thermostats for accuracy

It's very common for mechanical thermostats (dial or sliding lever styles) to become inaccurate over time. Sometimes they can be off by as much as 25 degrees! If you have a faulty thermostat, you might actually be heating to a much higher temperature than you realize and not saving energy.

If you are unable to upgrade to an electronic thermostat (see tip on this page), you should check your mechanical thermostat against the actual room temperature.

How to check your thermostat

First, place a separate digital room thermometer (available at hardware and home stores) on the wall next to the thermostat, and check the actual room temperature. Next, turn your thermostat until you hear a click. This indicates the heat has turned on. That point at which the heat clicks on equals your room temperature — even if the thermostat reflects a different temperature than the thermometer. For example, let's say your digital thermometer tells you the actual room temperature is 70 degrees but you adjust the thermostat and your heat clicks on at the 60-degree mark. That means your thermostat is miscalibrated by 10 degrees. So when turning on your heat, keep the difference in mind and use the digital thermometer for reference.

Set for energy savings

Don't just reach for the thermostat and turn until you hear it click on. Choose an energy-efficient setting. For cooler months, 68 degrees is a good setting for comfort and energy savings. At bedtime or when you're away, drop it to 60 degrees to save more energy. (Exception: For ceiling cable heat, the maximum setback is 2 to 3 degrees.) Ask everyone in your household to stick to these settings.

Save with each degree

As a rule, for every degree you lower the temperature, your electricity use drops by 2 percent. In order to achieve these savings, you must lower the setting in all zones in your home.*

Set the thermostat to the desired temperature — no higher

A room will heat up just as fast with the thermostat set at 70 degrees as it will set at 80 degrees. Setting it higher overheats your home and wastes energy.

Upgrade to an electronic programmable thermostat

If your situation permits, an electronic thermostat is highly recommended. They are more precise than mechanical thermostats and help improve comfort and economy.

Look for a model with a programmable setback feature to automatically lower temperatures at bed time, or when you're away.



Close doors

Turn the heat down or off in unused rooms and close the doors to keep heat where you want it. But watch for mold or mildew problems. Also remember that most zonal heat thermostats do not have an actual "off" setting, just a "low" setting — and the low temperature can vary depending on the accuracy or settings of your thermostat. With a "low" setting, the zonal heater might still cycle on and off, wasting energy, unless you turn it off completely at your electrical breaker panel.

*Individual circumstances will vary. Contact the PGE Energy Experts for more information.

continued on back >>>

