

# Vacation Tips

Before you leave on vacation, take a few minutes to turn off and unplug equipment. You'll save energy and avoid safety hazards. When you get back, check your energy use for the days you were gone with our free Energy Tracker tool. You might spot hidden energy wasters.

## What to unplug, turn off or turn down before leaving

### Lights

Turn off all lights except for one or two. Unless these lights are compact fluorescents or LEDs, put them on timers that can be set to random patterns to discourage potential prowlers. Photo sensors or motion detectors are good ideas for outdoor lights.

### Air conditioning

Turn it off. Close window coverings to help keep heat from building up in your home while you're away.

### Heating

Turn it down to 60 degrees to save energy. While setting the temperature lower or turning it off completely may save more energy, you'll increase the risks of mildew problems and frozen pipes.

### Water heater

Turn off your electric water heater at the breaker panel if you are going to be away for more than a few days. Turn natural gas waters down but not off.

### Refrigerator

If you're leaving on an extended trip of a month or more, you might want to empty, clean and unplug your refrigerator to save energy. Prop the door open to prevent odors.

### Clothes washer and dryer

Turn off the hot and cold water to your washer. Most homes don't have "burst proof" hoses connecting the washer to these faucets, and more than one person has returned from their vacation to a house flooded with water. The shutoffs are usually behind the washer. Put a sticky note on your washer to remind yourself to turn the water back on when you return from your trip. (Even better: Replace your old hoses — typically they are black rubber — with burst-proof hoses that have a braided stainless steel sleeve. They just screw into place.)

### Other appliances

Many other appliances also draw energy even when they're turned off — we call these "energy vampires." So, unplug your television, VCR/DVD player, stereo, computer, and other appliances. For safety's sake, don't overlook small appliances that are best left unplugged when unattended — items like toasters, coffee makers, irons, curling irons, hair dryers and electric tools.