

Portable electric space heater safety

With the rising cost of propane and natural gas, more and more customers are asking us how much it costs to run electric space heaters. The answer is simply divide your wattage by 1,000 and you get kWh per hour. In other words if you have a 1,500 watt space heater it will consume 1.5 or 1 1/2 kilowatts in one hour. At 7 cents per kilowatt that equals about 11 cents per hour. If that space heater ran continuously for 30 days it would cost almost \$80.00

Small space heaters are typically used when the main heating system is inadequate or when central heating is too costly to install or operate. In some cases, small space heaters can be less expensive to use if you only want to heat one room or supplement inadequate heating in one room. They can also boost the temperature of rooms used by individuals who are sensitive to cold, especially elderly persons, without overheating your entire home. When prices for fossil fuel are higher people tend to use electric space heaters more often. Some customers have reported that they



heat their entire house with electric space heaters. This is generally not recommended due to safety concerns.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that more than 25,000 residential fires every year are associated with the use of space heaters, causing more than 300 deaths. An estimated 6,000 persons receive hospital emergency room care for burn injuries associated with contacting hot surfaces of room heaters, mostly in non-fire situations. The more space heaters you have and the longer you run them, the higher your chances are of becoming one of these statistics

If you want to stay on the safe side, only use an electric space heater for temporary room heating and don't

leave it unattended if you have pets or small children. Choose the models that best fit your situation.

Portable electric heaters manufactured after 1991 include many new performance requirements to enhance safety. One such safety device is a tipover switch. The tip-over switch is designed to shut the heater off if it gets tipped over.

It's a good idea to purchase a heater that has a built-in thermostat to avoid overheating and wasting energy. It's recommended that you plug space heaters directly into outlets and avoid using extension cords. Never place an electric space heater within reaching distance of sinks, bath tubs, showers or any places where there is water.

Electric space heaters are a great way to supplement your home's heating system as long as they are used in accordance to the manufacturer's recommendations. Please use them safely.

Some information in this article was taken from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Brace yourself for 'Casper'

by Jamey Pankoke

On July 7, 2011, the Environmental Protection Agency released its final Cross State Air Pollution Rule (CSAPR). What is CSAPR? It is a rule that the Environmental Protection Agency designed to reduce the interstate transportation of pollutants from fossil-fueled generating plants. As described by the EPA, the rule will "significantly improve air quality by reducing power plant emissions that cross state lines." More specifically, the CSAPR ratchets down the permitted sulfur and nitrogen oxide emissions coming from coal-fired power plants in 27 states, to limit harm to air in other states.



Jamey Pankoke

On the surface, implementation of the CSAPR might sound like a good thing. However, compliance with the rule will cost electric utilities and its ratepayers billions of dollars. Perennial's wholesale power supplier, Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD), has estimated that the installation of additional emission control equipment necessary for compliance, such as scrubbers and selective catalytic reduction equipment, at its Gerald Gentleman Station near Sutherland would cost \$1.5 billion. At its smaller Sheldon Station near Hallam, the cost of similar equipment would be about \$300 million. To cover the capital costs of such equipment, NPPD projects that it would need to increase its electric rates 25 percent.

Another concern with the CSAPR, which is often referred to as 'Casper', is the EPA made compliance much more stringent in the final rule than what it had originally proposed. In October of 2010, NPPD commented on what was then the EPA's proposed rule for lower-

ing emissions. NPPD felt that reasonable options were available to meet the proposed emission limits at that time. But the rule changed. When the final rule was announced in July 2011, it contained much lower emission levels than what had been previously published.

NPPD and other companies in the states impacted by the CSAPR are looking at other options for compliance in addition to the installation of emission control equipment. The options include increased generation from natural gas, purchasing emission allowances from other utilities if available, reduced generation from its coal-fired plants. Although a combination of the above is possible, the option of reducing coal-fired generation will certainly happen, and it will result in higher costs for customers. The excess power that NPPD is able to produce above and beyond what it needs to serve its in-state customers is currently sold to out-of-state entities, with the revenue from the excess power sales used to help hold down rates. Reducing coal-fired generation to comply with the CSAPR will mean less revenue for NPPD from out-of-state utilities, and ultimately more revenue being required from in-state wholesale customers like Perennial. For 2012, NPPD has projected that the decreased energy sales to out-of-state utilities will decrease revenues by almost \$6 million.

The CSAPR will become effective January 1, 2012. Some in the electric utility industry in other states suggest that EPA is forcing these changes so fast that it quite possibly could endanger electric reliability. The thought is that many of the coal plants will be forced to limit or shut down operations, because the new rule will not allow enough time to implement economical compliance strategies.

On a legal front, Nebraska Attorney General Jon Bruning has filed a lawsuit in the D.C. Circuit Court of

Appeals challenging implementation of the CSAPR. Several other states have joined in the lawsuit including Texas, Alabama, South Carolina, Florida, Oklahoma, Virginia and Kansas.

It is not yet certain as to what NPPD and other power generation companies will do to comply with the CSAPR. But what is certain is compliance with 'Casper' as written will have a significant impact on future electric rates. Brace yourself!

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Our paperless bill (E-bill) is a great way to reduce your carbon footprint. Instead of receiving a paper bill in the mail, you will receive an e-mail notification that your bill is available for you to view or pay online.

E-bill is a safe and secure way to pay your Perennial bill. To sign up, go to www.perennialpower.com and click on the "Pay Bills Online" icon at the right side of the screen. You will need your Perennial account number to sign up for E-bill.

If you have questions or need assistance signing up for E-bill please call us at 402-362-3355 or 1-800-289-0288 or stop in the office during regular business hours, 7:30 - 4:30, Monday thru Friday. Go green, go e-bill and never receive a paper bill again!

New lighting standards begin in 2012

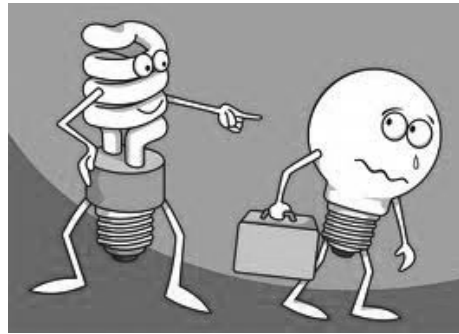
Beginning in 2012, common light bulbs sold in the U.S. will typically use about 25% to 80% less energy. Many bulbs meet these new standards, including incandescents, CFLs, and LEDs, and are already available for purchase today. The newer bulbs provide a wide range of choices in color and brightness, and many of them will last much longer than traditional light bulbs. The lighting standards, which phase in from 2012-2014, do not ban incandescent or any specific bulb type; they say that bulbs need to use about 25% less energy. The bipartisan Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA 2007) established these efficiency standards.

The new energy-saving light bulbs—incandescents, CFLs, and LEDs—are available today and could save you about \$50 per year when you replace 15 traditional incandescent bulbs in your home.

Measuring Light in Lumens

The new efficiency standards require light bulbs to consume less electricity (watts) for the amount of light produced (lumens). More traditional inefficient 100 watt (W) bulbs—typically incandescent bulbs—will give way to choices—including newer incandescent bulbs—that use only 72 watts or less to provide you a comparable amount of light (lumens). If you are replacing a 100W bulb, a good rule of thumb is to look for a bulb that gives you about 1600 lumens. Your new bulb should provide that level of brightness for no more than 72W, cutting your energy bill.

As of January 1, 2012, traditional, inefficient 100W incan-



descent light bulbs will not meet the standards and will no longer be available at most stores. However, you will have many other options that will save you money. Many of these choices are already on store shelves.

Similar standards will phase in for other types of light bulbs over the next three years. Traditional 75 watt incandescent light bulbs will no longer be available as of January 1, 2013. Traditional 40 and 60 watt incandescent light bulbs will no longer be available as of January 1, 2014.

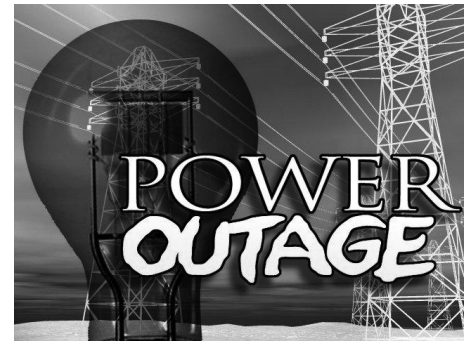
New Lighting Standards Will Save You Money

The savings can add up. Upgrading 15 inefficient incandescent bulbs in your home could save you about \$50 per year. Since most of the bulbs also have longer life spans, you'll continue to save into the future. Nationwide, lighting accounts for about 10% of home electricity use. With new EISA standards, U.S. households could save nearly \$6 billion dollars in 2015 alone.

Various specialty bulbs, including appliance bulbs, heavy-duty bulbs, colored lights and three-way bulbs, are exempt from the new standards. - *Source - U.S. Department of Energy*

Standby Generators

During power outages, many of us use backup electric generators for emergency electrical needs. If installed properly, use of generators to power your home, farm or business poses little danger. But, if installed incorrectly, your generator system could threaten the lives of family, friends, neighbors and electric utility crews trying to restore service. With cold of winter or even spring storms, using a properly installed back up generator may become necessary. It is never too soon to be thinking of the back up power you may need when the weather turns cold.



We want to know if you are using a generator!

Please let us know if you have or are planning to install a permanent or portable generator. If not properly isolated from our lines through a 3-way disconnect switch generators can back-feed onto our lines and injure our linemen. If you have any questions on installing your backup generator please contact Perennial Public Power District at 402-362-3355 or toll free at 1-800-289-02888.



Our Energy, Our Future
A Dialogue With America

Why electrical usage goes up during wintertime

“Why has my electrical usage gone up?” This is a common question regardless of the time of year.

There are several possible reasons for higher electrical bills, but before we list a few major causes, it is important to understand something important.

Your electric bill is made-up of two parts which are “base load” and “weather load.” To understand **Base Load** look at your lowest bill in the last 12 months which is usually in April or May. This is the time of year when there is no space heating or air conditioning. The term base load is used because this is the amount of electricity that you use every month on lighting, running appliances, televisions, game systems, and everything else that consumes electricity. Unless you change your living habits, replace older appliances with more energy-efficient ones, or install energy efficient lighting (CFLs), the base load will not go down.

Weather Load is the second component of your bill and is determined by the condition outside, how well your home is weatherized and whether you use outside equipment such as block heaters, livestock tank heaters, etc. Sometimes weather load is harder to control, but weatherizing, tuning up your heating system and lowering your thermostat will help. You should also make sure outside heating equipment such as block heaters, tank heaters or well heaters are on thermostats and are working properly.

If you are looking for ways to lower your bill, look for the obvious ones first. Simple things like shutting off lights when you leave a room, taking shorter showers or turning off the computer when you are done using it, will significantly lower your base load.

Here are a few other major causes of higher bills:

- Appliance Problems** - Loose gaskets around refrigerators or freezers doors or dirty cooling fins can cause them to run continuously and cost you more. A problem with the furnace or central air conditioner can also cause high usage. Annual maintenance is important especially on heating and cooling equipment as they make up about 50% of your electric bill.
- Electrical Wiring** - A loose connection or wires that are shorting to the ground either on the pole, house, or underground, can cause high usage. This type of problem as well as other equipment problems could also lead to a fire. Be sure to contact a licensed electrician if you suspect problems with your electrical wiring.
- Farm Well** - If you live in an area that is not served by a municipal water system, you must pay to pump your water. A water leak or a problem with the well’s pressure system, could cause your well to run too much and in some cases continuously.
- Block Heaters** - Block heaters are used to keep engines warm in the wintertime so they are easier to start. These heaters can use a lot of electricity when the outside tempera-

tures are cold. Be sure they are unhooked when temperatures are expected to stay above freezing.

- Heat Tape**- Heat tape is used to prevent water pipes from freezing in the wintertime. Colder temperatures or faulty thermostats (if so equipped) can cause higher usage. Be sure they are unplugged when temperatures are expected to stay above freezing.
- Livestock Tank Heaters** - Tank heaters are generally out in the open space and are exposed to extreme cold temperatures. Tank heaters usually operate using a thermostat. Thermostats can stick or can be set too high. In either case your bill will be higher. Be sure to check these heaters often and make sure they are shut off when temperatures are expected to stay above freezing.
- Hot-tubs** - If you have a hot-tub, you should expect to have a higher electric bill, especially if it is outside in the wintertime or used in an unconditioned room. You can help control your cost by paying attention to the water temperature and by making sure the lid is kept in place and well sealed when not in use.
- Added Appliances** - You may have a new energy efficient refrigerator, but your bill won’t be lower if you plugged in your old one in the garage. If you are purchasing a new appliance, be sure to look for the ENERGY STAR logo on it. The ENERGY STAR label ensures that you are purchasing a product that meets the highest level of energy efficiency and quality. Instead of using your old refrigerator or freezer in the garage, consider purchasing a larger one and consolidating your items into one unit.

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