

TOP ENERGY ISSUES

It's not uncommon for energy issues to arise at your home and you don't even know until you receive a higher-than-expected bill. Two of the most common problems we see are issues with air source heat pumps and hot water leaks/water heater issues. During the winter months, heat pumps may have a harder time extracting heat from the outside air and will use supplemental heat strips to reach the thermostat setting. Heat strips are wire elements that are heated by electricity and are costly when they are activated. Heat strips may also come on if you move the thermostat up more than two degrees at a time. When HVAC equipment malfunctions, it can cause heat strips to activate and stay on, without you being aware of this situation. This will be more noticeable during the summer months because it will hurt cooling efficiency. If the heat strips are "stuck on", you will need to call a licensed HVAC professional to fix the issue. Low refrigerant in a system can also cause the heat strips to run more than they should during a normal heating cycle.

Hot water leaks and water heater issues are the second most common problems we see. When a hot water leak occurs, the hot water runs out of the lines and has to be replaced

with more hot water. An electric water heater has 4,500 watt elements that activate to keep the water heated. When there is a hot water leak, these elements are running constantly to heat the influx of fresh water being pumped into the tank to replace water being lost from the leak. This can be costly if a leak goes undetected for an extended period of time. Sometimes the leaks will occur at the water heater and other times in other places in the home where plumbing pipes and fixtures are located. When leaks occur, some can be fixed by the homeowner, while others require a plumber.

To make sure your HVAC system is operating as it should, we recommend that you have your system serviced at least once a year by a licensed HVAC technician. Additionally, you should change your air filters every 30 days. It is recommended to use the cheaper/thinner air filters to help with proper air flow and return. When you first cut on your system go outside to make sure the fan is running. If the fan is not running, it could be a sign of an issue. Electric water heater elements will come on periodically throughout the day to ensure there is hot water available in the tank. If you think it is running more than it should, you can listen to



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it to see if it is cutting off as it should. You can also do a visual inspection of your lines to see if you have any leaks.

Another great tool for a homeowner to spot potential issues at their home is our website. You can view your daily usage by going on our website at www.sremc.com and creating an account. This is a great tool for members to save energy. Here, you can look at your daily usage with an overlay of the daily temperature highs and lows. This is a great demonstration of the impact weather has on energy use. You can manipulate things in the home to see what kind of effect it has on your energy usage. You can also sign up for daily energy-use notifications via text or e-mail. The website also offers tips on ways to save energy and money.

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