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- Easy Pay—(Automatic withdrawal from your checking or savings account) Go to okaloosagas.com, Manage your Account and sign-up
- Call 850-729-4700, to make a payment by phone, through our Customer Relationship Management Center
- Pay by electronic payment with a credit/debit card, or online by electronic check
- Pay online through your financial institution

Why a Natural Gas Dryer?

Clothes dryers are generally one of the most expensive home appliances to operate. Depending on usage, a clothes dryer typically accounts for about 6% of total home energy consumption. Unlike other appliances, dryers do not vary much from model to model in energy used and are not required to display Energy Guide Labels. All dryers work essentially the same way in that they tumble clothes through heated air to remove moisture, though electric dryers use heating coils to supply heat, while gas dryers use a gas burner. Despite these similarities, there are differences in the cost and performance of gas and electric dryers.

Gas dryers generally cost about $50 more to purchase, but, depending on energy prices, cost less to operate. According to The Consumer Energy Center, a typical load of laundry in a gas dryer costs 15-20 cents, while an electric dryer costs 30-40 cents per load. For energy usage, natural gas dryers heat the air quicker than electric, and as a result, dries clothes faster. For the 2009 average price for electricity of $0.115 per kilowatt hour (Energy Information Administration), an electric appliance, at 40kWh per month would cost an estimated $9.20 a month or $110.40 per year. A typical gas dryer uses 4 kWh per month of electricity and 3.2 therms of natural gas each month. At the 2009 prices of $0.115 per kWh and $1.03 per therm for natural gas, a gas dryer would use an estimated $3.75 a month or $45.07 per year.

The Information Pipeline

Inside this issue...

Summer2010

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Summer Sizzles with Natural Gas Outdoor Grills

Just as with indoor gas cook tops, outdoor grills offer weekend chefs greater speed and control over the food being cooked. The yearly average gas consumption for natural gas grills is 15 therms. It typically costs about eight times more to cook food for six on a charcoal grill than it does on a natural gas grill.

Options

Many outdoor grill vendors offer quick disconnect valves to allow for storage and transportation. They also come with options like smoke drawers that hold flavor chips.

Maintenance & Safety

As with any appliance, proper maintenance will extend the operating life of the grill. Here are a few of the safety and maintenance guidelines that are often provided in the manufacturer's instructions:

- Do not wear loose clothing when operating your gas grill.
- Keep children and pets at a safe distance.
- Shut off your gas supply or disconnect before you clean, paint, or perform other maintenance work on a natural gas grill.
- Before using a gas grill, make sure all the connections are tight and that there are no cracks in the hose.
- Make sure the grill's burners are clear, as well as the tubes from the burners to the gas valve.
- Always keep the lid open when lighting the grill to prevent gas from causing a sudden flare up.
- Clean the burners with a wire brush.
- Coals are self-cleaning. Follow your manufacturer's instructions to burn off food residues and grease drippings.

Conducting an Energy Investigation of Your Home

With the rising cost of everything, it would seem like there is no mystery at all to your higher energy bills. As any good detective will tell you, however, things are never quite so simple. A close inspection of your home will likely reveal numerous examples of energy culprits that are causing inefficiencies and costing you money. By performing a residential energy audit, you can become your own energy sleuth, searching for clues as to where your home may be wasting energy and evaluating what measures you can take to improve efficiency, lower utility bills, and increase comfort. So Sherlock, what are you waiting for? Grab your raincoat and fedora hat and let's get to work.

Gathering Information

Let's start with a few questions. A little information can give you some perspective about where and how your home uses energy as you begin your audit. Remember, "Just the facts Ma'am."

- What year was your house built? Homes more than 30 years old often have significant problems, such as inadequate insulation, leaky doors and windows, and inefficient appliances.
- What is the square footage and number of rooms in your home?
- What type of energy do you use for home appliances? Electric vs. gas water heating, space heating, range, etc.

What are your average monthly energy costs? Examine your energy bills over the past 12 months. This will give you a good overview of your seasonal energy consumption.

Do-It-Yourself Home Energy Audit

You can easily conduct a home energy audit yourself. With a simple but diligent walk-through, you can spot many problems in any type of house. When auditing your home, keep a checklist of areas you have inspected and problems you've found. This list will help you prioritize your energy efficiency upgrades. Below is a checklist of some of the usual suspects.

- Air Leaks - Check for gaps along baseboards, on the edge of flooring, or at junctions between walls and ceiling. Also, check for air-flow around window frames, weather stripping on doors, fireplace dampers, and attic hatches.
- Insulation - Check to make sure that your walls, ceilings, attic, and basement are insulated according to recommended levels. Ceiling insulation can be checked simply if you have access to your attic by a stairway or crawlspace.
- Ductwork - Check exposed ducts in basements, attics, and crawlspaces for leaks or poorly sealed connections. In addition, applying insulation to ducts that run through areas that get hot in summer and cold in winter can save significant energy.
- Water Heater - The water heater should be set at 120°F or below and an approved hot water blanket wrapped around it for insulation.
- Lighting - Examine the wattage size of the light bulbs in your house. You may have 100-watt (or larger) bulbs where 60 or 75 watts would do. You should also consider compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) for areas where lights are on for hours at a time.
- Phantom Loads - Home appliances and equipment should be turned off when not in use. Many electronics (e.g., computers, TVs, and coffee makers) continue to use energy while turned off, but still plugged in. Power strips can be used to shut off any power to the electronics, so no energy is wasted.

Now that you've completed your inspection, it's time to implement the recommended energy saving measures. In some areas, such as lighting and ductwork, you can do the work yourself. In other areas, such as insulation, you may need to hire a qualified professional. Once you have made the improvements, compare your monthly energy bills before and after. Chances are you will see noticeable improvements in your energy costs and home comfort.

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