

SPOTLIGHT

JONES-ONSLOW EMC—POWERING HOMES SINCE 1939

FEBRUARY 2022

Understanding the Impact of Heat Strips on Your Electric Bill

Turning your thermostat up a little at a time can mean big savings.



If your electric bill is higher than anticipated in the wintertime, the answer may be found in how often the heat strips in your heating system are activated. Heat strips are the emergency or auxiliary part of your heating system, designed to work when it is exceptionally cold, and they require more energy to operate than the normal operations of your system. Although it is necessary for your heat pump to use heat strips to perform some tasks, such as defrosting your unit, there are some things you can do to prevent your heat pump from using them frequently.

If your home is well insulated, keeping the thermostat at a low, regulated temperature should keep you from excessively using your heat pump and heat strips. If you lower the temperature when you are sleeping, or when you leave the house for an extended period of time, don't raise it more than two degrees at a time when you wake up or return home. Raising it any more than two degrees at a time will cause the system to go into auxiliary mode and activate the

heat strips, which will increase your energy use unnecessarily.

Using a programmable thermostat is an excellent way to ensure your heat strips only come on when needed. In the event you have turned the heat down while away, prior to returning, you can raise the thermostat setting in two-degree increments using the app on your phone, resulting in a comfortable temperature upon arrival without utilizing the unit's heat strips.

Under normal conditions, the cost of running a heat pump for a JOEMC member is around 30 to 35 cents per hour. When operating in the auxiliary/emergency heating mode, that cost goes up to around \$1.30 per hour. If your heat pump is operating in auxiliary/emergency mode without due cause (outdoor temperatures are above freezing or no drastic adjustment to your thermostat), it is possible that your system is malfunctioning. You should contact a licensed heating and cooling professional and have it serviced immediately.

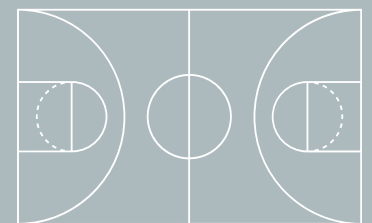


Do You have a Middle Schooler Who Loves Basketball?

If your child wants to gain experience training alongside real college basketball players and coaches, apply for a Touchstone Energy Sports Camp Scholarship and attend basketball camp for free this summer!

Jones-Onslow EMC is now accepting applications for full scholarships to renowned basketball camps at two North Carolina universities this summer. Young men can apply for a scholarship to attend the UNC Basketball Camp at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and young women can apply for a spot at the Wolfpack Women's Basketball Camp held at North Carolina State University in Raleigh.

Students must be rising sixth or seventh graders to apply. Applicants will be judged on their academics, extracurricular activities and an essay. Applications and more information have been sent to all public middle schools in the JOEMC service area.



You can also download a TSE Sports Camp application at joemc.com. The application deadline is March 31.

ENERGYEFFICIENCY

Are Portable Space Heaters Efficient for My Home?

Small space heaters are meant to do exactly as their name says: heat a small space. But unfortunately, many people use portable space heaters to heat their entire home, which can take a toll on your energy bills. The truth is, whether you should use space heaters depends on your home's efficiency and energy needs.

Suppose you're using a space heater to compensate for problems in your home, like inadequate insulation, drafty windows and exterior doors, or an inefficient heating system. In that case, space heaters are not a practical solution. Your best bet is to improve the overall efficiency of your home. Loose-fill insulation typically costs \$1 to \$1.50 per square foot, but if you're on a tight budget, caulking and weather stripping around windows and exterior doors is a low-cost, easy way to save energy. Taking these proactive energy-saving measures rather than relying on space heaters for supplemental warmth can reduce your heating and cooling bills for years to come.

Perhaps your home is energy efficient, but you're cold-natured and want a

specific room to be cozier than the rest. In this case, a space heater may work for your needs. A good comparison is ceiling fans; we use ceiling fans in the summer to cool people, not rooms. A space heater can be used similarly during the winter months. Only use a space heater in small spaces that you're occupying and, if possible, try to shut off other rooms to contain the warmth provided by the space heater. If you decide to use a space heater to heat a small area in your home, make sure the heater is properly sized for the space; most heaters include a general sizing table.

A word about safety: the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates more than 25,000 residential fires are associated with the use of space heaters every year, resulting in more than 300 deaths. Choose a thermostatically controlled heater to avoid energy waste and overheating, and place the heater on a level surface away from foot traffic when in use. If you must use a space heater, purchase a newer model that includes the most



current safety features and make sure it carries the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label. Always keep children and pets away from space heaters.

Consider alternative ways to stay warm, like extra layers of clothing or UL-approved electric blankets. If you have hardwood or tile floors, lay down area rugs to provide additional insulation (and appeal!) and maintain warmth.

We know it's cold out there, but remember, in addition to safety concerns, space heaters can significantly increase your energy bills if used improperly.

If you're looking for alternative ways to save energy and increase comfort in your home, visit joemc.com and click on the Energy Center. We're here to help you manage your energy use.



Mark Your Calendar

As mentioned in last month's newsletter, JOEMC will once again hold the annual meeting virtually. We are excited to have the opportunity to bring the co-op's business directly to you in your home or business on Friday, March 25, at 10 a.m., or any time after that. Members can watch the meeting on the JOEMC Facebook page, and our website for viewing whenever is convenient.

Starting in late February or early March, members will receive information in the mail that includes everything needed to register for the event. Members returning the registration information to the co-op will be entered into the annual meeting prize giveaways, including 300 \$50 Visa gift cards. One lucky registered member will also win a recently retired fleet vehicle (in "as is" condition). All prize winners will be announced during the business meeting on March 25.

SAFETYFIRST

Put Safety First During Winter Weather



It's no surprise that the winter months bring an increased potential for fire risks and electrical safety hazards. This makes sense because consumers use additional electrical devices and appliances during the coldest months, like space heaters, electric blankets, and portable generators. **Keep these tips in mind to protect you and your family when winter weather comes your way:**

1. Place space heaters on solid surfaces at least three feet away from flammable items. Always turn off space heaters before exiting a room or going to sleep.
2. Don't leave a fireplace unattended unless embers are extinguished. Use a fire screen to catch rolling logs or sparks.
3. Generators should only be used in open and ventilated areas. They should never be operated inside a home, including in a basement or garage, due to the risk of carbon monoxide fumes. Never connect generators directly to household wiring without first having a qualified electrician install a transfer switch to prevent backfeeding, which poses a serious threat to line workers.
4. If using Sterno or charcoal for cooking food, always do so outside in a well-ventilated area. Cooking indoors with Sterno or charcoal will produce deadly carbon-monoxide fumes, which are colorless and odorless.
5. Stay away from downed or sagging power lines and don't attempt to remove tree limbs from lines. Never drive over power lines and always assume they are electrified and dangerous. Alert your electric cooperative of any damaged lines immediately.

To learn more about space heater safety, generator safety and other ways to keep you and your family safe, visit joemc.com.



Fresh Lunchbox Pizza

Fresh pizza in their lunch box? That's a parenting win, for sure. And thanks to canned biscuits, these are ready to throw in their lunch as fast as you can say "pop!"

Ingredients

- 1 tube (7½ ounces) refrigerated buttermilk biscuits (10 biscuits)
- ¼ cup tomato sauce
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- ¾ cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- 10 slices pepperoni (optional)
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil

Directions

1. Flatten each biscuit into a 3-inch circle and press into a greased muffin cup.
2. Combine the tomato sauce and Italian seasoning; spoon 1 teaspoonful into each cup.
3. Top each with about 1 tablespoon of cheese and a slice of pepperoni (optional).
4. Bake at 425 degrees for 10-15 minutes or until golden brown. Sprinkle with basil, if desired. For lunch boxes, refrigerate overnight before packing.

MEMBERSERVICES

Secure Options for Our Members

Jones-Onslow is committed to the safety of our members and the protection of members' private information. Over the past year, we have enhanced our automated phone system to provide members the opportunity to use a stored member profile when making payments via our IVR (interactive voice response system). This profile can be added through your online member portal or with our customer service representatives. Once added, your member profile will allow you to make payments with a push of a button, and your information will remain secure, encrypted, and stored for future transactions. The automated system ensures that you control your bank card information, and it will not be used until



you initiate a payment with JOEMC.

In addition to making a payment over the phone, our system now offers a new feature: a Courtesy Call for when call volumes are at a high level. You will never have to worry about losing your place in line; the computer will hold your spot in the queue, freeing you to do other things in your day and bypass the hold music. When it is your turn, you will receive a phone call back and be connected with one of our customer service representatives without waiting on the phone.

To learn more about payment options or doing business with us visit, joemc.com.

JOEMC to Add Utility-Scale Battery Energy Storage

Last month, North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives announced the planned installation of cutting-edge battery energy storage technology in 10 communities across North Carolina served by electric cooperatives. The battery projects will be integrated at existing electric distribution substations, adding local energy resources to enhance system resilience and reliability for co-op members. JOEMC will be participating in the battery project with the installation of a battery in our Queens Creek Substation in the Hubert/Swansboro area.

The batteries are being engineered and constructed by North Carolina-based FlexGen, the second-largest energy storage technology company in the nation and a leader in designing energy storage solutions that further the ongoing evolution in the energy industry.

The battery energy storage system installations began earlier this year, with activations anticipated in the summer. Each site will bring temporary construction jobs to the local community and help enhance area resources for future investment.

The 10 battery installations will collectively provide 40 MWs of power and will be charged when demand for electricity is low and discharged during moments of peak demand. This enhances electric reliability and is expected to provide cost savings over the lifetime of the batteries. Co-op members will benefit from those savings because cooperatives are not-for-profit, at-cost energy providers.

JOEMC and the other electric cooperatives in North Carolina have worked together for years to lead innovative energy strategies, including community solar,



Jones-Onslow EMC
CEO Jeffery T. Clark

microgrids, electric vehicle chargers, demand response programs, and solar- plus storage initiatives. We remain committed to innovation that advances our Brighter Future vision for increasingly sustainable, affordable, and reliable electricity and supports our goal of reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The substation batteries complement this growing collection of distributed energy resources, which cooperatives are integrating into the grid and deploying at scale. By monitoring and coordinating distributed resources, cooperatives are acting as a 'distribution operator.' In this role, cooperatives can collectively manage resources across the state to maximize benefits, including greater visibility across the system, optimized operation for enhanced grid resilience, and increased reliability.

We've been planning for a brighter, more sustainable future for a long time. We've spent the past decade reducing our dependence on carbon-intensive power generation, and as a result, our current fuel mix is more than 60 percent carbon-free. Coal-fired generation makes up less than 5 percent of our portfolio, compared with the national average of 13 percent.

JOEMC and the other electric cooperatives of North Carolina will continue to provide a brighter future for our members. Our local roots guide our innovation and actions and focus on delivering value to our members and communities. In this decade and beyond, we will continue our commitment to providing reliable electricity at the lowest possible cost while also advancing the pursuit of responsible sustainability goals. ❖

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

About 30% of a home's heating energy is lost through inefficient windows. Caulk and weatherstrip all windows to seal air leaks.

When running your home heating system, lock all operable windows to ensure the tightest seal possible.



Source: Dept. of Energy



www.joemc.com