



## **Summer Savings News Briefing June 29, 2018 FAQS**

### **What's the overall weather forecast for Central Texas this summer?**

Austin is most likely to experience a summer that's hotter and drier than normal. Forecasters predict up to 40 to 50 days of at least 100-degree heat in the Austin area. The National Weather Service says 70 percent of south Central Texas will experience dry conditions.

### **What effect has the weather had so far on Austinites' utility bills?**

The average temperature for May was the warmest on record for that month in Austin, and the average temperature for June has been running well above average. The long-range outlook calls for above-normal temperatures and below-normal rainfall through at least the end of September. We are also seeing increases in total water pumped, and we can project further reductions in the reservoirs that serve Austin this summer. Put simply, weather drives electric and water use, and that use drives monthly costs. So this is an alert for the kind of hot and dry weather that may be coming in July, August and September. The soaring temperatures in May and most of June could mean higher bills are ahead unless residents take action to manage their utility bills. That's why Austin Energy and Austin Water launched this year's Summer Savings campaign – to give residents the tools to manage those bills.

### **So what can Austinites do to manage their electricity and water bills?**

They can follow conservation tips and take advantage of conservation rebate and incentive programs by Austin Energy and Austin Water. These tips can help you manage the water and electric portions of your bills. Download our free apps to help you understand your use and stay informed during outages. And take advantage of Austin Energy's high bill energy audits and Austin Water's irrigation audits.

### **Where can people learn more about these tips to manage their utility bills?**

Go to [austinenergy.com/go/summersavings](http://austinenergy.com/go/summersavings) and [austintexas.gov/summersavings](http://austintexas.gov/summersavings) for tools and tips to monitor your energy and water use and manage your utility bills. Start by downloading the [Austin Energy web app](#) and the [Austin Water Dropcountr app](#). The Austin Energy web app lets you monitor daily energy use and sign up to receive alerts when you approach a higher-priced billing tier. Austin Water's Dropcountr app creates a customized water use profile for your household and gives tips for saving water.

### **What specific low or no-cost ways can customers manage their energy and water bills?**

To lower your water bill, we have these top five water-saving tips:

1. Water your lawn on your assigned day and times.
2. Clean your driveway or sidewalk with a broom, not a hose.

3. Wash your car at a commercial car wash that recycles water. This saves hundreds of gallons of water when compared to washing your car at home.
4. Adjust sprinklers so that only your lawn is being watered.
5. Use drip irrigation for bedded plants, shrubs and trees to apply water directly to the roots.

**And here are the top five energy-saving tips:**

1. Change your AC filter every month in the summer. This helps with air flow and quality.
2. Set your thermostat at 78 degrees or higher when possible. Every degree higher can decrease your bill by 3 percent.
3. Unplug chargers. Turn off power strips when not in use. Electronics plugged in while “off” can account for up to 10 percent of home energy use.
4. Keep curtains and blinds drawn on windows hit by direct sunlight, which can quickly raise indoor temperatures 5-10 degrees.
5. Point fans in your direction to make you feel 2-4 degrees cooler. Turn them off when you leave the room. Fans cool people, not rooms.

**Some conservation improvements cost money. How can low-income residents make their home more energy-efficient?**

To make sure everyone has access to some of the resource efficiency tools, today we're announcing the Direct Install program. With this program, Austin Energy and Austin Water will make available more than 50,000 LEDs and 10,000 low-flow water devices to single and multifamily homes in low-income areas. Another 15,000 LEDs and 2,000 low-flow water will be delivered through single-family energy efficiency programs and non-profit organizations affiliated with the Housing Repair Coalition of the Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Department. And another 20,000 LEDs will be made available at various community events. We will offer the program in low-income customer areas and at events in those areas where most recipients are Austin Energy customers.

**What does the Summer Savings outreach effort consist of?**

The campaign includes advertising and public relations efforts with print, radio, outdoor and television ads as well as news and social media and direct customer communications. This year marks the first time both Austin Energy and Austin Water have teamed up to spread the word that summer's hot, dry weather drives up resource use and the costs that customers see in their bills, and that both departments have ways to help customers manage their costs. We also will provide information at four community meetings in areas with high water and energy use.