girl scouts of western washington

Discover
Girl Scouts at Home

The Great Cascadia
Zombie Survival Challenge
COVID-19 Edition: Light & Heat

Step 1 — Thermostats and Temperatures

Your house might have a little box on the wall somewhere in your home that is used to control the heating and cooling system. It is a thermostat. A **thermostat** is a component which senses the temperature of a physical system like your furnace or air conditioner and performs actions so that the system's temperature is maintained near a desired setpoint.

When you need to heat your home, the setpoint should be between 68-72 degrees. To cool your home, the setpoint should be 75-78 degrees.

With an adult in your household, find your thermostat. What is your current setpoint? Talk to the members of your household about what temperatures are best for you and adjust your thermostat setpoints accordingly.

If you decide that energy conservation is an important value for your household, consider setting the heat setpoint at 68 degrees and the air conditioning setpoint to 78 degrees.

Another consideration is to turn your thermostat down even more during the overnight hours to 65 degrees. This will save energy and money.

Step 2 — Utility Bill Challenge

Most of us do not usually spend 24 hours a day at home. Our thermostats usually take a break in the middle of the day while we are at work and school. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we are staying home and staying healthy. What does that mean for our utility bills? As you can probably imagine, our bills are likely to go up.

With your household members, compare the utility bills for January, February, March, and April 2020. What trends do you see? Talk about how these increases might impact your household budget. Determine together if you can make changes to your water and power usage.

Practice good water saving measures like turning off the water while you brush your teeth or wash your hands (which we are all doing A LOT). Drop the thermostat a few degrees and bundle up, turn off lights in rooms you are not using, or take a shorter shower.

Conservation is not only great for our environment but also helps our budgets.

The Governor of Washington has required utilities to not turn off services for failure to pay bills during this pandemic crisis. The Governor also required utilities to provide rate payer assistance as needed. Contact your utility provider for more information.

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Step 3 — It was a Dark and Stormy Night...

"Happiness can be found, even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light."
— Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban

Depending on where you live, power outages may be common. Are you prepared?

With your household, put together a storm/power outage kit. Consider a plastic tub you can slide under your sofa or a fabric bag you can hang in a closet.

Your kit should include:

- **Flashlights and extra batteries, lanterns, candles and matches.**
- **Solar and/or Kinetic flashlights.**
- **Mobile/Tablet battery chargers.**
- **An old fashioned telephone which draws its power from the phone line not the power line, if you still have a landline.**

Hand warmers are also a good thing to have in your box. Perhaps add a thermos (this needs to be filled before the power goes out) and packages of tea, coffee, cocoa, soup, or instant oatmeal. Consider adding some non-perishable snacks such as granola bars, trail mix, or nuts.

Step 4 — Layer Up Or Layer Off

While the calendar may say it's spring, it can sometimes feel like it is still winter. It is always nice to come inside and feel the warmth of the heater after playing outside. Likewise, summer is coming and being cool is important to our comfort as well. Layering your clothing helps in both scenarios.

Besides turning your thermostat higher, what other ways can you stay warm inside?

- Wear a sweater or sweatshirt.
- Wear socks or slippers on your feet to keep them cozy.
- Have throw blankets around the house to pull over you when you feel a chill.
- Move your body.
- Put on a hat.
- Have a cup of cocoa or tea.

What ways could you stay cool in warm weather besides turning up the air conditioner?

- Wear light colors and fabrics.
- Open your windows at night and then close them during the day.
- Have a cool drink.
- Find some shade.