Along the Lines
A Publication of Rolla Municipal Utilities

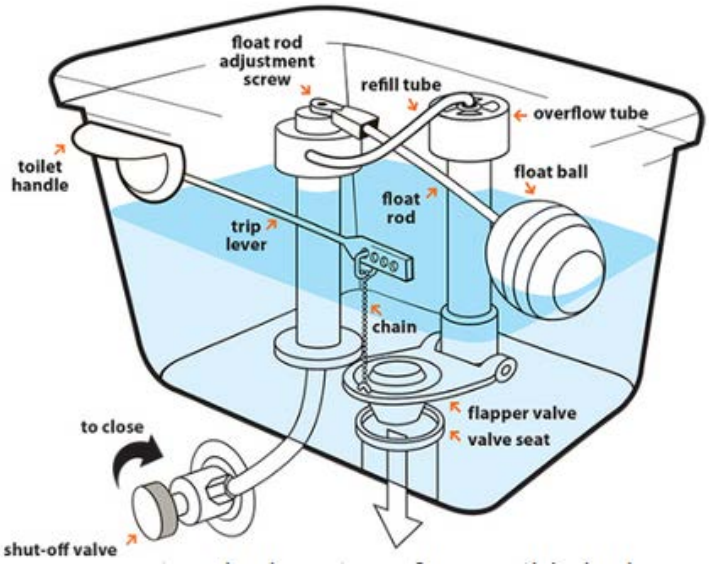
Is Your Toilet a Thief?

Your toilet could be robbing you of a sizable sum of money. Toilets are the most common cause for household leaks. Replacing older, high flow toilets with low flow models and checking for and repairing leaks regularly are an important part of reducing your household's water use.

1) If you hear running water or hissing sounds, your toilet may have a leak and is trying to refill.

2) Remove the toilet tank lid and flush. Check that all moving parts work smoothly, without getting hung up or tangled.

3) After the tank has refilled, see if water is flowing down the overflow tube. This type of leak can be silent. To correct, adjust the water level or replace the float. The water level should stop about 1 inch below the top of the tube.



4) The flapper valve is the rubber stopper at the bottom of the toilet tank. To check if the flapper valve is leaking, conduct a toilet dye tab test. Place a dye tablet or several drops of food coloring in the tank of the toilet but DO NOT FLUSH. Dye tablets are available for FREE at the RMU Business Office. Let stand for 30 minutes. Now check the toilet bowl. If you see colored water, the flapper valve is leaking and should be replaced.

HOW DOES COLD WEATHER AFFECT YOUR ELECTRIC BILL?

A frequent misconception is that RMU's rates fluctuate with the weather — higher in summer or winter. In reality, that's not the case. RMU's rates are established by the Rolla Board of Public Works, typically take effect on October 1, and remain unchanged until the following October.

Does Cold Weather Affect Electricity Usage?

Yes, if electricity is your primary source for heating your home, usage does go up as the temperature goes down. It takes more energy to heat your home when the temperature falls. So, if your home uses electricity to produce heat, it's nearly a guarantee that you will use more electricity during the colder winter months. How much more? That depends on how cold it gets. As the difference between the temperature outside and your thermostat setting increases, more energy is required to bridge that gap. If your home is low on insulation or you have drafty windows or doors with a lot of air leaks, your furnace will have to work even harder. That's why we recommend everyone spend some time checking their home in the fall for ways to prepare their home for winter to save on winter energy bills. See page 2 for some tips to conserve energy.





RMU is proud to support the Shop with a Cop program

ROLLA MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

PEAK ALERT PROGRAM

To join, text "EZRMUALERT" to (573) 341-1344

By joining the RMU Peak Alert Program, participants receive text alerts on their phones warning them of upcoming peak electric demand windows, a time when we all need to try and lower our electric usage.

These peak windows are times in which customers are expected to use a large quantity of electricity at the same time. Simply put, peak times occur when the majority of customers on the electrical grid are using the most power at the same time. During the winter, this usually occurs in the mornings between 6-10 a.m. RMU's cost of electricity is based on how much power is used during these peak demand times.

RMU is a nonprofit organization and when we can control our costs, it allows us to control your rates. This is why on the coldest mornings, we may send a text asking customers to minimize energy usage.

Remember: When RMU Saves, You Save!

TIPS TO REDUCE YOUR ELECTRICITY USE WHEN IT'S COLD

When the temperature goes down, reducing your electricity usage is an excellent way to keep your bills down and reduce your demand on the grid. Our favorite strategies for minimizing your energy use are as follows.

- Resist the urge to turn up the heater and turn the thermostat down a few degrees. Each degree you reduce may save you 2% on your heating costs. Grab a sweater and some warm socks instead. If you head out of town for a few days, you can drop it down to 55 degrees, but don’t shut it off entirely to avoid returning home to frozen pipes.
- Use a portable space heater if you reduce your home thermostat setting but still want to warm up a small room. They’re small and efficient — most space heaters use around 1,500 watts of electricity, whereas an electric furnace can use ten times more. Always follow all manufacturer's instructions and adhere to key safety guidelines .
- Seal up the drafts. If you feel air coming in along windows or doors, replace the weather stripping or use caulk or other draft-reduction tools to keep the warm air in and cold air out.
- Draw the curtains and shut the blinds at night and during cold, cloudy days. Covering your windows can reduce heat loss through the windows. Open curtains and blinds during sunny days to let in solar heat.
- Replace your furnace filters regularly. Dirty filters make it work harder and uses more electricity.
- Add insulation where needed. Generating heat is one of the most energy-intensive activities, so if you’re letting heated air escape, it’s not far from throwing money out the window. Check the attic and strengthen any weak points.