



# Current

News from Floresville Electric Light & Power System

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## Higher SEER Ratings Can Mean Substantial Savings

### Save Money with Efficient Air Conditioning Used Carefully

Air conditioning can account for roughly 30 percent of the total amount of electricity used in a home. So any reduction in the amount of electricity an air conditioner uses can mean money in your pocket.

SEER (Seasonal Energy Efficiency Rating) is a good number to know when buying an air conditioner. Regulated by the U.S. Department of Energy, this rating provides useful guidance for selecting energy efficient central air conditioners.

The minimum SEER rating required on new central air conditioners is 13. This number may seem low compared with the most efficient air conditioners available today; however, just a few years ago, the minimum was 10. The higher the rating, the more energy efficient the unit will be in using electricity.

In South Texas, where summer temperatures can be really high, buying a central air conditioner with a higher SEER rating will save you enough money to pay for the initial investment. And you will enjoy energy savings for the life of the unit, typically between 15 and 18 years.

The following chart illustrates how you save money as the SEER rating increases. The information assumes

that the air conditioner runs eight hours a day during the cooling season of 120 days, totaling 960 hours of operation. The cost is based on 12 cents per kilowatt hour.

SEER Rating	Season Cost	Savings
9	\$768.00	
13	\$531.69	\$236.31
16	\$432.00	\$336.00

The values shown are used for comparison only and may or may not meet your specific energy usage. Please refer to EnergyDepot at [www.felps.us](http://www.felps.us) or check with the manufacturer for more specific details about ratings of central air conditioners.

## National Designation Focuses on Electrical Safety

May is designated National Electrical Safety Month to call attention to the need to practice safety around electricity.

Each year, hundreds of lives are lost and thousands more are injured in needless electricity-related accidents in homes, schools, the workplace and recreational settings. To reduce the likelihood that you and your family will become victims of an electrical accident, be sure you are informed about electricity and its dangers.

Electricity's home is in the earth. When electricity is isolated from the ground, it will always look for the most direct path back to the earth, through any material in its way.

Modern technology and more than a century of experience have given us the ability to use electricity wisely and safely. Just follow a few tips to stay safe:

- Always look up to locate power lines and avoid hitting them when carrying ladders, pipes or other long items.
- Watch where you dig to avoid hitting underground lines. Call for a locator to mark underground services before planting trees and completing other digging projects.

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## FELPS Briefs

- Look for an article in the next newsletter, the July/August issue, for information about new terms and conditions for FELPS service.
- Please note that the FELPS office will be closed on May 27 for Memorial Day. Regular office hours will resume at 8 a.m. on the following business day.
- To report outages, including on holidays and after business hours (Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-5 p.m.), please call 830-216-7000 and select sub-option 2.
- Visit [www.felps.us](http://www.felps.us) and follow us on Facebook and Twitter to get FELPS information and to learn about services. You can report outages 24 hours a day on the web site, a good time-saver, particularly during storms.

- Never use electric equipment around water. Take particular care in the kitchen and bathroom when using electric appliances and never use electric tools in the rain or on wet surfaces.
- Never touch a fallen wire or assume the wire is not energized. If a power line is on the ground or hanging loose, call FELPS to report it at 830-216-7000 and select sub-option 2.
- Use ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlets in bathrooms and kitchens where water is used and for outdoors.

The Electrical Safety Foundation International provides information about electric safety on its Web site: [www.esfi.org](http://www.esfi.org). Check this important resource for additional ways to protect yourself and your family.

## FELPS Funds Scholarships and Youth Programs

Again this year, FELPS will help sponsor summer youth programs in the five cities in the service area and will support scholarships to graduating seniors at each of the five area high schools.

FELPS scholarships of \$750 will be awarded at each of the five high schools—Floresville, Poth, La Vernia, Stockdale and Falls City—to assist students with tuition at accredited colleges, universities or technical institutions.

Scholarship awards and the application process are handled by the school districts. Parents or guardians of scholarship recipients must be FELPS customers and students must have good academic and disciplinary records.

FELPS will donate \$2 per meter as a match for funds dedicated by each city to provide summer youth programs in Falls City, Floresville, La Vernia, Poth and Stockdale.

## Follow These Tips to Save on Air Conditioning

The SEER rating of the air conditioner is only one item to consider in achieving energy efficiency:

- Have your air conditioning system serviced to ensure that it's clean and operating efficiently. A well-maintained system helps lower operating costs and increases the life of the equipment.

- A home also needs to be sealed and well insulated to cut down on drafts. Use caulk and weather stripping to seal any openings.
- Be certain that the attic has enough insulation to achieve a rating of R-30. Insulation can be installed from rolls or loose insulation can be blown into the attic.
- Duct work should be checked annually for leaks. Cover holes and leaking joints with Underwriters Laboratories (UL) tape to prevent cooled air from being forced out or unconditioned air from being drawn into return ducts. You can save 10 percent or more on your utility bill by sealing up air leaks.
- Have a professional replace the insulation and moisture barrier on the air conditioning ducts, if needed.
- A programmable thermostat will allow you to save by changing the settings according to times when you are away.
- Cleaning or replacing the air filter every two weeks during the summer season will make your air conditioner operate more efficiently.
- Keep the thermostat set at 78-80 degrees. Adding a ceiling fan can help keep you cool at this setting.

## Water Heating, the Next Big User

After air conditioning, the next largest user of electricity in the summer is the water heater, which generally represents about 15 percent of your total electric bill.

You can reduce the amount of time the water heater operates by reducing the amount of hot water you use, whether for showers or for doing laundry. Washing clothes in warm or cold water will reduce the amount of work the water heater must do.

Also set the water heater thermostat at 120 degrees, unless the dishwasher manufacturer has recommended a higher setting. Dishes generally will come out spot-free even at the lower setting while the reduced temperature setting cuts down on the energy needed to keep water hot in the tank.

### Watch for Overloading to be Safe

Overloaded electrical circuits are a major cause of residential fires. Help lower your risk of electrical fires by not overloading your electrical system.



## Contacting FELPS

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Business hours: Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

After 5 p.m.: (830) 216-7000 (for outages, press sub-option 2, or report outages online)

The Floresville Electric Light and Power System Board of Trustees meets the last Wednesday of each month at 8 a.m. in the utility offices, 1400 Fourth Street, Floresville.