



**FROM THE DESK OF
COMMISSIONER
BRENT BAILEY
CENTRAL DISTRICT OFFICE**



The Central District is pleased to bring you the latest information concerning utility rates, project developments, Public Service Commission actions and other news you can use. I hope you will find this information to be a useful resource to learn about the Public Service Commission, consumer issues and the continuous work we are doing for the citizens in the Central District and across the state of Mississippi. Thank you again for allowing me to serve you in this capacity.

Brent Bailey

**KEEP YOUR UTILITY BILLS DOWN WHILE
KEEPING YOUR FAMILY SAFE**

Working from home full or part-time has become more accepted in the U.S. in recent years. And now with the COVID-19 pandemic taking grip across the country, many people are experiencing working from home for the first time. Or people are finding themselves at home due to temporary business closures, layoffs, or shelter-in-place orders. And when combined with the closure of educational facilities that result in school-aged kids doing their daily school work at home, spending more time indoors can mean higher home utility bills.

While you may be saving gas money by reducing commuting, not running kids to ball practice and not traveling in general, it is important that you prepare for larger home energy, water/sewer and telecommunications bills. At the same time, there are steps that you can take to improve efficiency, reduce water and energy use, and save money while still being productive:

Be mindful of your thermostat setting: Being home may require reprogramming your programmable thermostat. Adjust the thermostat schedule and settings to maintain comfort for all occupants and don't be afraid to dress for the season. Wear a sweat suit and slippers if it's still cold out, or stay cool in shorts and t-shirt if you're in a warmer climate. If you are alone, consider using a ceiling fan to maintain comfort. Heating and cooling of the home is generally around 35 percent of total energy use.

Keep filters clean: Make sure that any accessible air filters in your heating and cooling systems are kept clean. Clean or change filters every 30 days to keep it running efficiently. Also, make sure you're cleaning out your lint trap in your clothes dryer before each use.

Be mindful of how/when you use appliances: When we think of major appliances, we think of the stove, water heater, refrigerator, clothes washer/dryer and dish washing machine. All these items make life easier and healthier, but we can use them more efficiently. Avoid cooking, running the dishwasher, or running the clothes dryer during the hottest times of the day. These activities add heat to your living space, increasing the load on the air conditioner. Try grilling outside, using the microwave and running those appliances overnight. Wash clothes with cold water and make sure you have a full load. Use a lower heat setting on the dryer and use a dryer ball to help cut energy costs. Run the dishwasher only when it is full and scrape instead of pre-rinsing the dishes. Lastly, when hungry try not to stare aimlessly into the refrigerator with the door wide open.



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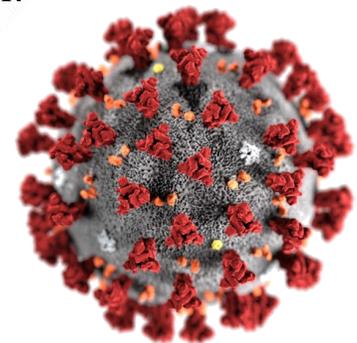
Cut off electronics: Our homes are now full of gadgets and devices that stay plugged in 24/7. If you work from home, then you likely have computers, printers, scanners, shredders and more. Add the energy these use to the energy used by TVs, cable boxes, entertainment stations, etc. and energy use can add up considerably. Make sure electronics are turned off when not in use or set them to sleep mode. Use power strips to uniformly shut off power to devices and stop vampire loads. When purchasing new appliances and electronics, make sure it's ENERGY STAR® certified. ENERGY STAR® certified products use less energy than standard models.

Hand washing: Good hygiene (and social distancing) is key to staying healthy and safe during the COVID-19 outbreak. Washing your hands with soap and cold water is just as effective as washing them with hot water. Of course, proper handwashing technique is a must regardless of water temperature. By sticking to cold water, you'll reduce energy consumption and water waste, particularly if you have to run the water for a bit to get the hot water to the tap.

Lighting: While lighting only accounts for about 11 percent of a home's energy use, you can still take steps light your home efficiently. Use natural light when feasible, but keep shades, blinds or other window coverings closed on hot, sunny days to reduce heat gain, especially if you aren't home. Change to LED bulbs. LED lights save energy and release less heat into the room, helping you stay cool and reducing the load on your air conditioner. LED bulbs generally cost a little more upfront but pay for themselves very quickly in energy savings. Task lighting uses less energy than whole-room lighting.

DIY: In addition to these tips, there are also other do-it-yourself items that can help make your home more efficient and more comfortable at the same time. One of the most effective steps is to properly seal windows and doors and add insulation in the attic. Unsealed openings and inadequate insulation allows energy to seep out, cold/hot air to seep in, and draining your wallet in the process. You can also add water low-flow devices to faucets and showers to reduce water waste.

Utility-Administered Programs: Most electric and natural gas utilities – including the major utilities in Mississippi – have developed and implemented a diverse portfolio of energy efficiency programs that target all customers and sectors using a variety of strategies and measures. Each program type provides a unique level of savings. However, with families isolating themselves in their homes and apartments, actual work installing energy efficiency measures is swiftly dropping. Few people want contractors in their homes, and many contractors either do not want to work in potentially unsafe conditions or are prohibited from doing so. I am concerned that this slowdown in activity will lead to layoffs and halting of manufacturing. It could take a while to staff back up and begin delivering energy efficiency services and products to customers again after the health emergency is over.



More information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic in Mississippi, including case details and additional important preventive steps can be found through the Mississippi Department of Health's website: [HealthyMS.com/covid-19](https://www.health.ms.gov/covid-19)



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MPSC Actions: Until the COVID-19 crisis has passed and we resume some level of normal economic activity, please be mindful of what you can do at your home to be safe and conserve resources. The Mississippi Public Service Commission has taken actions to help consumers in this time of uncertainty. One of those actions include a statewide temporary suspension of disconnections of electric, water, sewer and natural gas utility services due to non-payment through May 14. We understand that some families may be in financial distress as economic activity slows across the state and earnings drop. While our Order does NOT relieve anyone of their obligation to pay for utility services used, we felt that this action could take some temporary pressure off families. The MPSC urges people to continue paying your bills on time to avoid a hefty utility bill(s) total when the Order expires.

Whether you are in your home for the long-term or will be moving into a new home in the near-term, it pays to [make your home as energy efficient as possible](#). Investigate what efficiency programs your electric and natural gas utility offers its customers. And implement habits and practices that reduce energy and water waste. Take care and stay safe!!

**APRIL IS NATIONAL
SAFE DIGGING MONTH**



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

Mississippi Public Service Commission Central District Office

A banner for National Safe Digging Month. The background is a close-up of green grass. A large grey shovel icon is positioned in the center, pointing downwards. The text "APRIL IS NATIONAL SAFE DIGGING MONTH" is prominently displayed at the top. The Mississippi Public Service Commission logo is on the left, and the 811 logo with the slogan "Know what's below. Call before you dig." is on the right. The text "Mississippi Public Service Commission" and "Central District Office" is at the bottom.

NATIONAL LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY

**APRIL
18**



Mississippi Public Service Commission Central District Office

A banner for National Lineman Appreciation Day. The background is a collage of photos showing linemen working on power lines. The text "NATIONAL LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY" is at the top. "APRIL 18" is written in large, bold letters. The Mississippi Public Service Commission logo is in the bottom right corner. The text "Mississippi Public Service Commission" and "Central District Office" is at the bottom.