

AUSTIN UTILITIES NOW

INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CITY SERVICES



February 2024

Stay warm and save this winter

Explore these tools and tips from Austin Energy and Austin Water to help you save on winter utility bills.

For your electric bill:

- » **Set your thermostat a few degrees lower** to save on energy costs.
- » **On cold days, keep window shades open** so the sun can help heat your home.
- » **Seal up your home to prevent air drafts.** Caulk, weatherstrip and add foam gap filler around windows, doors and plumbing fixtures.
- » **When not in use, close your fireplace damper** to prevent heat from escaping up the chimney.
- » **Keep the heat in the oven by using the oven light to check your food** instead of opening the door. Stay safe and never use your oven to heat your home.
- » **Check your energy use regularly to avoid surprises.** Log in at coutilities.com and view the Energy Management tool. Find more winter savings tips at austinenergy.com/winter.



For your water bill:

- » **Don't water outside in the winter months.** Turn off automatic irrigation.
- » **Winterize outdoor spigots** when temperatures are expected to dip below freezing to prevent broken pipes.
- » **Wash only full loads** in your dishwasher and washing machine.
- » **Take shorter showers.** Try for less than 5 minutes.
- » **Look for the WaterSense® label** when buying new water-using appliances and fixtures.
- » **Fix leaky faucets.** Even a slow drip can waste several gallons a day. Find more water-saving tips at austintexas.gov/department/water-saving-tips.



Is your green cart full? Set out up to 15 extra items

If it grows, it goes in your green cart. Yard trimmings and small branches can be set out with your curbside composting. Fill up your green cart first — making sure the lid can close — then place up to 15 extra items beside it. Extra composting material should be placed in lawn and leaf bags or a reusable container no larger than 34 gallons and no heavier than 50 pounds.

Each bundle, bag and container counts as a separate item toward the limit. Extra composting material over 15 items can be set out the following week. Learn more at austintexas.gov/composting.

Check it off your list

It's hard to know when you might have a power outage. Ice, wind, vehicle crashes, tree branches and even animals can all cause outages. Here are simple items to add to your emergency checklist that can help you be ready for whatever comes our way:

- » **Sign up for Outage Alerts** by texting **REG** to **287846**. Every member of your household with a cell phone can register.
- » **Know how to report an outage** online at outagemap.austinenergy.com, by texting **OUT** to **287846** or by calling **512-322-9100**.
- » **Check out the Outage Map** to find information about power outages near you. Visit outagemap.austinenergy.com

and get to know the map before an outage.

- » **Check your contact info** so Austin Energy can reach you in an emergency. Log into your account at coutilities.com or call **512-494-9400** to verify your cell phone number and email address.
- » **Make an emergency plan** specific to your needs. Know your evacuation options, make an emergency kit and know how to stay safe and informed during a power outage. Find more emergency kit ideas, safety tips and other resources at austinenergy.com/outage.



Get Ready. Stay Ready.

Know what to do in case of an outage.



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Check off those spring cleaning to-dos

Spring is nearly here and with it, the desire to tidy and organize. The City has programs, online tools and guidance to help you tackle your to-do list safely:

- » **Make an appointment** to drop off items at the Recycle and Reuse Drop-Off Center — austintexas.gov/dropoff.
- » **Show your garden** and trees some TLC with these resources — austintexas.gov/department/grow-green-resources and austintexas.gov/trees.
- » **Hire a licensed hauler** to transport unwanted property — austintexas.gov/page/licensed-haulers.

Once the warmer weather is here:

- » **Check that your roof** is in good condition, ensuring that there are no leaks and that rain gutters and downspouts are clear of leaves and other debris.
- » **Give your HVAC system** a once-over to make sure the exhaust pipe is properly connected.

Enjoy this time of year with more seasonal tips at austintexas.gov/springcleaning.



Avoid utility bill scams — hang up on suspicious calls

The phone rings. The call seems to be from a local number — it may even say it's from Austin Energy — so you answer. The caller tells you your utility bill is overdue. They threaten you, claiming that you must pay immediately or be disconnected. They ask for payment by an unusual method, perhaps a prepaid Visa® gift card, Zelle® or even cryptocurrency. It's no coincidence that paying by these methods makes it nearly impossible to trace the scammer or get your money back.

Or maybe the caller tries a different con: They tell you that you've overpaid and that they need your bank account number or credit card number to process a "refund."

Scams are constantly evolving, but the way to avoid being scammed remains the same. Hang up, then call the number shown on your utility bill — **512-494-9400** — to check your account status and report the scam. Do not use any call-back number given



to you by the scammer.

Remember that City of Austin Utilities will never call residential customers with immediate cut-off deadlines, ask for a credit card or wire transfer over the phone or demand payment through a non-traceable method.

If you receive a call from a scammer, make a note of the call details, especially the phone number the call appears to be from and any call-back number the scammer gave you. Report the call to City of Austin Utilities, who will work with the law enforcement agencies that investigate scammers and shut them down.



Austin is for EVERYONE

In Austin, weird is wonderful. Our eclectic communities, cultures and tastes are what make us cool. We all belong here.

Take action to keep Austin a safe and welcoming place. If you see or experience an act of hate — report it. Learn more at austintexas.gov/againsthate.



Don't toss yard trimmings into creeks

Disposing of tree limbs and branches in or near creeks can clog culverts and may increase flood risk. Learn how to properly dispose of brush at austintexas.gov/composting. Report any clogged culvert concerns through the Austin 311 mobile app or call **3-1-1** or **512-974-2000**.

Para obtener una copia en español de esta publicación, visite coutilities.com/go/utilitynews.

Customer Service Phone: 512-494-9400

24-Hour Power Outage Reporting: 512-322-9100 | 24-Hour Emergency Water Service: 512-972-1000

East Austin Utility Customer Service Center (Walk-in Center): 2800 Webberville Rd.

North Austin Utility Customer Service Center (Walk-in Center): 8716 Research Blvd., Ste. 115

South Austin Utility Customer Service Center (Walk-in Center): 1901 W. William Cannon Drive, Ste. 100

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