

July 10, 2012 | By Christine Clark

Sustainability Experts at UC San Diego Give Tips on How to Beat the Heat and Save Energy



UC San Diego has photovoltaic panels on rooftops and parking

Heat waves and power outages have been plaguing the nation in recent weeks and temperatures are expected to rise higher than usual in San Diego County within a few days.

“In these extreme weather conditions, it’s important for people to be aware of how much power they are using because the high demand for energy and high temperatures go hand-and-hand,” said Dave Weil, director of building commissioning and sustainability at the University of California, San Diego. “At UC San Diego,

saving energy is a top priority all year-round. The university generates about 90 percent of its annual electricity demand.”

Later this week, forecasters expect temperatures in San Diego to peak between 95 and 105 degrees in the inland valleys; 90 and 100 in the mountains below 6,000 feet; 75 and 90 in the mountains above 6,000 feet; 115 and 120 in the lower deserts; and 100 and 110 in the upper deserts.

High temperatures were one of the causes of the major blackout that hit the Southwest in September of 2011. However, there are several simple ways community members can beat the heat and save energy during the summer months, according to Kristin Hansen, sustainability analyst at UC San Diego.

These energy saving practices include:

- **Adjust your thermostat**—Changing your home temperature setting to 75 degrees during the summer avoids over chilling your space and keeps your energy bill down.
- **Consider line drying your laundry or hang drying towels**—Let the sun do the work for free!

- **Plug your appliances into a power strip especially your TV devices**—With the rise of the flat screen TVs, cable boxes and DVR's, TV set-ups are now surpassing refrigerators as the biggest energy hog in American homes. Don't forget that all these appliances draw energy even when they are turned off, but still plugged in. Power strips are an easy solution to help you remember to unplug devices and completely power off.
- **Adjust your water heater to a lower temperature**—You can easily lower your water heater's temperature to 120 degrees to save energy and money. Ask your plumber for assistance so you can start realizing savings!
- **Use light appliances that you really need**—Even a basic light bulb can heat a room.
- **Weather-strip the doors in your home**—This cheap and easy solution for the home ensures chilled air doesn't escape and keeps warm air from creeping into the home.
- **Keep drapes closed and shades drawn**—The amount of energy required to cool your home will be considerably less.

Weil notes that UC San Diego saves energy through the use of an ultra-clean and efficient natural-gas-fired cogeneration plant, renewable energy fuel cell and solar photovoltaics.

“The impact of these energy initiatives is a significant example of UC San Diego's comprehensive approach to creating a sustainable campus,” he said. “All campus facilities and operations are being redesigned to create a highly energy-efficient, carbon-neutral campus by 2025.”

For more information about UC San Diego's energy efficiency, go to <http://sustainability.ucsd.edu/initiatives/energy-production.html>.

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