

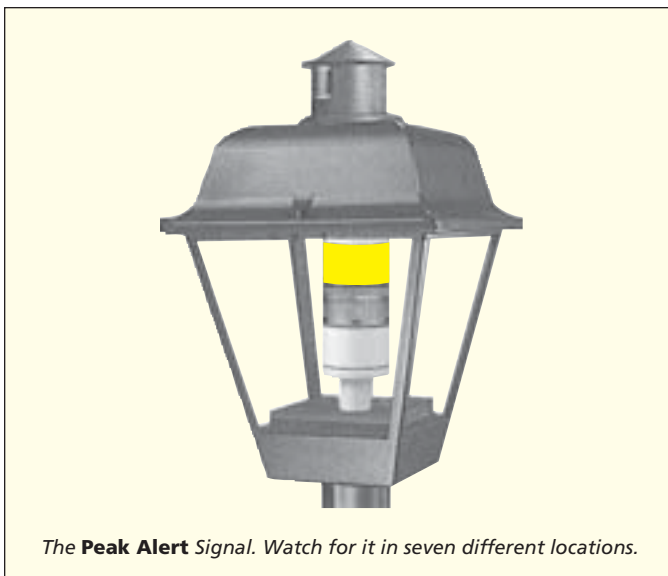
We all have the power to save

Although rising energy prices are outside our control, there are some steps we all can take to hold down electric costs. Using less electricity overall, and shifting power use away from peak use times, will help cut costs for everyone.

Most of the electricity generation plants serving New England run on high-priced fossil fuels, which is one reason why costs are rising. Since new power plants take years to design, permit and build, there is no quick way to reduce our dependence on these facilities. But conserving electricity right now can make an immediate difference.

Using less electricity not only lowers your bill directly, it also helps hold down power costs for everyone. That's because in today's deregulated energy markets, lower demand tends to lower wholesale prices. Shifting power use away from peak-use times also minimizes the amount of electricity we need to buy in the volatile and expensive spot energy market, which translates to lower rates for everyone.

To let you know exactly when it's most important to conserve, we have reactivated Groton's **Peak Alert** program. If we all do a little, we'll save a lot!



Knowledge is power

Find out how much it's costing you to run your home appliances, and you'll know where it's most effective to cut back. It's easy with our new Energy Calculator. Just visit our website at www.grotonelectric.org and select the Energy Calculator in the Energy Conservation section.

This new feature can help you figure the approximate energy use and cost for most of the electric items in your home. Fill in your personal data, and you can print out a report with totals pretty close to your actual bill. For more energy-saving ideas, see the back of this newsletter.

Here's how we can save

Signals in seven different locations will flash when we expect energy demand and wholesale prices to spike. During those times, please postpone all non-urgent electric use until after 9 p.m. Even when the **Peak Alert** signals are off, using as little electricity as possible between 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. will help hold down power costs significantly.

Watch for **Peak Alert** signals at:

- The entrance to the Four Corners area
- Main Street across from Town Hall
- The intersection of Hollis Street, Chicopee Row and Longley Road
- Main Street across from Mill Street
- The top of Long Hill Road
- West Groton Square
- Lost Lake Drive

CONSERVATION TIPS

12 ways to use less energy at home

If we all put some of these ideas into practice, the result will be a lower peak demand for electricity in Groton this winter. If we lower our peak, we will lower our costs.

Start saving today with these ideas:

1. If you have an electric water heater, lower the thermostat to 120° F. If you don't have a new, super-insulated model, make sure it is wrapped in an insulation blanket.
2. Take short showers instead of baths.
3. Set your thermostat a few degrees lower for the winter. Install a programmable thermostat that is compatible with your heating system. You can save about 2% for every degree the thermostat is turned down.
4. Use compact fluorescent light bulbs. In general you will get the same amount of illumination for 25% of the electricity and, they last 10 times longer.
5. Cover all your windows with thick curtains or plastic sheeting. Older windows allow a significant amount of heat transfer to the outside. Anywhere you sense a draft, caulk both inside and out.
6. Make sure to check all of the light switches and outlets for drafts also. If you find drafts coming through any of your light switches or outlets, stop by the Light Department for free insulators.
7. Make sure that there is no airflow around any of your doors. If you feel any drafts, replace your weather-stripping or door sweeps.
8. Wash only full loads of dishes and clothes.
9. Whenever you purchase a new appliance always keep in mind the operating cost. Total cost over the years will usually be lower for a more expensive Energy Star appliance since they consume less electricity.

(Continued at the top of the next column)

10. Air dry dishes instead of using your dishwasher's drying cycle.
11. Turn off your computer and monitor when not in use.
12. Plug home electronics, such as TVs and DVD players, into power strips. Turn the power strips off when the equipment is not in use. TVs and DVD players still use several watts of power in standby mode.

Is your meter clear?

Please remember our meter readers at this time of the year. They must physically get from your driveway to your electric meter. As the snow piles up, make sure there is a clear path to your meter. Remember, if you can't get to your meter, neither can we.

Share the gift of warmth

You can help area families in need stay warm this winter with a contribution to the Good Neighbor Energy Fund, administered by the Salvation Army. Send your donation to the nearest Salvation Army office, or use the donation envelope we're enclosing in your January 31 bill.

If financial hardship leaves you unable to pay your electric bill, contact:

- the Salvation Army office nearest you to see if you qualify for help, or go online to www.salvationarmy-ma.org
- Fuel Assistance at 978-448-1100
- the Groton Trust Fund at 978-448-1173
- Loaves and Fishes at 978-772-4627