

Heat Pump Owners, This is For You

As you know, there is a difference between your heat pump and a forced air furnace. This is especially true for operation of the thermostat.

A heat pump thermostat is unique, in that it controls two heating systems, the outdoor component—which is the heat pump or refrigerant portion—and the indoor or supplemental/auxiliary heat.

Since supplemental heat is more expensive to operate than a heat pump, you need to find a temperature setting comfortable for you and leave it at that setting.

This makes sense when you consider the thermostat has two stages. The first stage senses that the temperature is below your setting and turns on the heat pump. The second stage is there for when it gets even colder, and turns on the supplemental heat. This only happens when it is so cold outside the heat pump cannot keep the house warm by itself.

If you turn up the thermostat, it is likely both stages will come on and cost you more money.

The second important feature to consider is there are separate settings for the cooling system. If the thermostat has two levers for setting the temperature, there must be



at least a five-degree difference between your heating and cooling settings. It is better yet to keep the settings 10 degrees apart. This keeps the cooling from coming on if the heating overshoots the target.

If the heat pump and cooling come on alternately, you will have high bills. The same holds true if your thermostat has an auto setting. The only systems you don't have to worry about are those you have to set it to either heat or cool.

In the summer, it may take your heat pump a while to bring the house temperature down. So, decide on your preferred temperature and set it for the times you will be home.

Your thermostat should have a light that comes on when your aux-

iliary heat comes on. If it does not have a light, you should consider having one installed.

If something goes wrong with your heat pump and it shuts down, the unit will automatically switch to auxiliary heat. At that point, it operates just like an electric forced air furnace and could surprise you with a high bill on your next billing.

If you have a light that indicates when the auxiliary heat is on and you see it is on all the time when it is not really cold outside, you will know sooner than later that something is wrong.

Since supplemental heat is needed during cold weather, don't be alarmed unless it comes on often during mild weather—above 45 degrees. Even during mild temperatures, the supplemental heat may operate frequently if outdoor humidity is causing frequent defrosting of the outdoor coil.

In our climate, this should not occur very often.

Look in next month's Ruralite for additional information on operating your heat pump efficiently. You can also call Klickitat PUD's Energy Services department at (509) 773-7622 or (800) 548-8357 for a handbook on this subject. ■



Klickitat PUD Holds Annual Customer Meetings

During the next few months, the Klickitat PUD staff and Commissioners will attend meetings of various community and city councils, and other community action groups throughout Klickitat County.

Our goal is to reach out and interact with customers in each community and discuss items of interest specific to each community in relation to the electric, water and wastewater services provided by KPUD.

Upcoming Meetings:

March 8: Appleton Council meeting, 7 p.m.

March 13: Husum Council meeting, 7 p.m.