



BERKSHIRE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION TEAM

20 Chapel St. Pittsfield, MA 01201 • thebeatnews.org

(413) 464-9402 • team@thebeatnews.org

Protecting the environment for wildlife in support of the natural world that sustains us all.

Reducing Peak Electricity Demand

What is peak demand?

During heat waves and cold snaps, electricity use rises as more people run air conditioners, heating systems, and appliances at the same time. When demand becomes especially high, ISO New England (the organization that manages the region's electric grid) may call on additional power plants—often natural gas and oil-fired peaker plants—to help meet that demand. Peaker plants operate only during periods of especially high electricity use.

Did you know?

Electricity must be produced the moment it's used. Because it can't be stored across the electric grid in large quantities, reducing demand during peak hours helps avoid bringing additional power plants online.

Why does it matter?

Reducing electricity use during periods of peak demand can:

- Reduce the need to operate peaker power plants.
- Lower greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution.
- Help improve grid reliability during periods of high demand.
- Reduce stress on the electric grid.

When should you reduce your electricity use?

On weekdays, try to reduce electricity use between 5:00 PM and 8:00 PM, especially from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM, when demand is often highest.

What can you do during a Peak Alert?

- Cool your home before 5 PM. In summer, cool the rooms you're using before peak hours, then raise the thermostat a few degrees—or turn the AC off if you're comfortable.
- Use fans and close blinds or curtains. Fans can help keep you comfortable while using less electricity, and closed blinds help keep heat out.
- Delay using large appliances. Run the dishwasher, do laundry, and use other energy-intensive appliances after 8:00 PM. Wash laundry with cold water when possible.
- Charge electric vehicles overnight. If you drive an EV, schedule charging between 9:00 PM and 7:00 AM whenever possible.
- During winter cold snaps, delay using large electric appliances until after peak demand whenever possible.
- Turn off lights and electronics you're not using. Small reductions across many households can make a meaningful difference during peak demand.

Stay informed

Sign up for Shave the Peak alerts to receive notifications when reducing electricity use will have the greatest impact:



www.greenenergyconsumers.org/shavethepeak

Small changes made during peak demand can reduce pollution, improve grid reliability, and reduce the need to operate additional fossil fuel power plants.