



Plan a happy homecoming



If you're planning an extended family vacation during the waning months of summer, here are a few tips to ensure a happy homecoming and help you avoid unnecessary energy costs:

- If you'll be gone more than a weekend, **turn off the circuit breaker** to your water heater. Why pay to heat water for an empty home?
- If you plan to be away less than a month, leave the refrigerator temperature control at its usual setting, but **use or remove those perishables** before you go.
- For longer vacations, you'll save energy dollars if you **turn off the refrigerator**. Remove all food, turn off the circuit breaker, clean interior thoroughly, and prop the doors open to prevent odors from forming. While the refrigerator is off, it might be a good time to **vacuum the compressor coils**. Dust on coils acts as insulation, making your appliances run less efficiently. The coils are usually located behind the front bottom grill panel or on the back of your refrigerator or freezer.
- **Clean your appliances** thoroughly before you go since insects love to dine on crumbs and spills.
- **Unplug** your television, VCR, microwave, personal computer and other sensitive electronic equipment in case there are power problems while you're away.
- Arrange for payment of your electric bill during your absence.

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Submitting a damage claim

Look for the flyer in this month's electric bill that explains how to make a claim if you have losses due to a power outage. As a reminder, the rules of MECO's tariff, approved by the Public Utilities Commission, say that you have a responsibility to **protect your equipment**. Consider devices like surge suppressors or an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) to protect your computers and other sensitive electronic equipment.



Meet us at the MECO Fair

Want to know how to save money on your electric bill? Looking for ways to teach your kids electric safety? Wondering how we read your electric meter? You'll find answers to these questions and much more at our annual MECO in Our Community Fair on **Saturday, September 11** from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Kaahumanu Shopping Center. There'll be hands-on activities, entertainment, and fun for the whole family. See you there!

More home remodeling tips

In last month's *Consumer Lines*, we covered how incorporating energy efficiency into your home remodeling can save you money for years to come. Here are more energy-saving remodeling tips:



Solar electric power

- Install photovoltaic security and outdoor lighting.
- Install photovoltaic attic fans to draw hot air out of your home (eligible for the state energy tax credit).



Water heating

- Consider installing a solar or heat pump water heater (eligible for the state energy tax credit and MECO cash incentive), or
- Select a high-efficiency electric water heater (eligible for MECO cash incentive).
- Install a heat trap or pipe insulation on several feet of piping from the water heater.
- Install a solar heater or heat pump for swimming pool heaters.

Natural ventilation

- Provide adequate windows and wall openings for cross ventilation.
- Incorporate sill vents, floor vents, and high point vents, such as venting skylights, to allow hot air to escape the building.
- Appliances.
- Install energy efficient washing machines and dishwashers with reduced water consumption features. Consider newer front-loading clothes washers that use less water and are easier on clothes.
- Use the Energy Guide label when available to select energy efficient appliances.

(Many of these ideas are from the Hawaii Advanced Building Technologies Training Program, State Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism - Energy, Resources and Technology Division).

Checking out your electric meter

To ensure your electric bill is accurate, MECO meter electricians may need to check out the MECO electric meter on your property. They may have to replace malfunctioning meters, upgrade meters, do periodic tests for accuracy, or look into billing complaints, large variations in energy use or other unusual circumstances. MECO meter personnel will always do their best to let you know they're on your property, but at times, in order to address problems promptly, they may have to enter the premises without your acknowledgement.

All MECO employees carry a company ID card so please feel free to ask to see it. If you suspect the card is a fake, you may ask for their supervisor's phone number to verify the reason for their visit. If someone refuses to show you their ID, promptly report these incidents to MECO and the police.



Poi Andagi (Okinawan Doughnut)

- 3 quarts salad oil for deep frying
- 1 bag (18 oz.) fresh poi (starchy paste made from mashed taro)
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 1/2 cups flour
- 2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup water



RECIPE OF THE MONTH

In a deep skillet, heat oil to 350° F. In a large bowl, combine poi, eggs, sugar, and vanilla; mix well. Combine flour and baking powder; add to poi mixture. Stir until dry ingredients are moistened, adding enough water to make a smooth thick batter. Drop teaspoonfuls of batter into the hot oil; fry until doughnuts rise to surface and are golden brown. Drain on paper towels. Makes 15 to 20 doughnuts.