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## Take Care of Texas Tips

### At Home:

### Upgrade Your Home Cooling and Heating System

In Texas, cooling and heating accounts for about 45% of annual home energy expenses. By using a properly sized Energy Star cooling and heating system, you can reduce your home energy consumption by 8% and help improve air quality. Collectively, we could reduce energy consumption throughout Texas by more than 16 billion kWh if all Texas households replaced their heating and cooling systems with Energy Star HVAC systems.

### Around the Office:

### Reduce Your Unwanted Mail

Each year junk mail, including unsolicited mail to businesses, ends up as 4 million tons of solid waste. E-mail or call direct-marketing companies to remove your name or those of former employees from their mailing lists—some companies have websites that allow for removal. You also can register with a comprehensive junk-mail reduction service for a small fee. Search for "junk mail" online to find some of these services. By taking your name off marketing mailing lists, you can help reduce waste.

## Weatherize Your Irrigation System

To minimize the risk of freeze damage to your irrigation system, you'll need to "winterize" it in just a few simple steps.



1. **Remove the water from your system, especially if you live in the northern regions of Texas.** There are three types of water removal: manual drain, auto drain, or blowout. If you don't know your system type, consult a licensed landscape irrigator.
2. **Shut your system down for the season.** Depending on your system's controller, set it to "rain mode" or simply turn it off. Turning your system off will prevent it from accidentally operating, which can damage the system and cause ice hazards.
3. **Insulate your irrigation system's backflow preventer.** This is especially important if your backflow preventer is installed above ground and exposed. Purchase a winter cover sold at home supply stores and irrigation warehouses, or use a small amount of self-sticking, foam insulating tape to wrap around the backflow without blocking the drain outlets or the air vents.
4. **Get a spring "tune-up."** When winter is over, have a licensed irrigator inspect your system for damage and make sure it's operating properly.

Find a licensed landscape irrigator in your city or county at [www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/lawn](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/lawn).

## Texas Parks and Wildlife Loaner Trunks

As part of its collection of teacher resources for outdoor learning, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department offers "loaner trunks" to formal and informal educators and youth leaders. Each trunk contains activities and materials appropriate for multiple-age-level groups. You can find contact information for borrowing each trunk and its availability by city at [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/resources/trunks/city\\_listing.phtml](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/resources/trunks/city_listing.phtml).



Available Trunks:  
[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/resources/trunks/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/resources/trunks/)

- Bird Trunk
- Coastal Critter Bingo
- Coastal Ecosystem Treasures Trunk
- Rare Texas Wildlife Trunk
- Texas Educational Bat Trunk
- Texas Wetlands Discovery Trunks
- Wild in the City Trunk

## Did You Know?

- **Widespread drought conditions continue.** Visit the TCEQ's Texas Drought Information Web page at <[www.tceq.texas.gov/response/drought](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/response/drought)> to find current information on the drought, watering restrictions around the state, and available public education resources.
- **You can donate or recycle your old computer.** Did you receive a new computer for the holidays? Remember to recycle your old one at <[www.TexasRecyclesComputers.org](http://www.TexasRecyclesComputers.org)>.

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## Don't Forget...

Point Source Emission Inventory Workshops.  
([www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/point-source-ei/psei.html](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/point-source-ei/psei.html))



- Austin - January 12
- Fort Worth - January 25
- Houston - January 30

TCEQ Environmental Trade Fair and Conference in Austin, May 1–2, 2012.  
([www.tceq.texas.gov/p2/events/etf/etf.html](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/p2/events/etf/etf.html))

- Booth Sales begin January 23 for four or more contiguous spaces
- Booth Sales for all other spaces, January 30
- Attendee Registration begins February 6

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## Get Involved in the Permitting Process

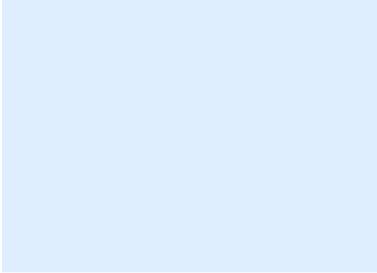
Want to know more about the TCEQ's permitting process and how you can participate? Get an overview of public participation in the permitting process, how you can comment on pending permit applications, and learn about public meetings and contested case hearings at <[www.tceq.texas.gov/agency/permitting-participation/pub\\_part.html](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/agency/permitting-participation/pub_part.html)>.

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## Highlighted TCEQ Publications



**Saving Water Saves Money (bill stuffer ) /Ahorrar agua ahorra dinero, GI-400**, Water systems and municipalities can choose from various sizes of this bill stuffer that offers tips to customers on water conservation and efficiency to reduce costs. Bill stuffer dimensions are 3.5" x 5.5". ([www.tceq.texas.gov/publications/gi-gi-400.html](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/publications/gi-gi-400.html))



***Answers to Some Burning Questions, GI-415***, This publication offers general information to help people in Texas learn of the basic rules and recommendations on outdoor burning in a residential setting. This publication includes the information in Spanish. ([www.tceq.texas.gov/publications/gi/gi-415.html](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/publications/gi/gi-415.html))



## **Take Care of Texas is on Facebook!**

Connect with Take Care of Texas to find out about environmental events, tips, and interesting tidbits from fellow Texans. Visit our page at <[www.facebook.com/TakeCareOfTexas](http://www.facebook.com/TakeCareOfTexas)>.

## **Take the Survey!**

The TCEQ values your opinion on how we are doing and how we can improve—fill out a survey today. Go online at <[www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/customersurvey](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/customersurvey)>, or request a paper copy by calling 800-687-4040.

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