

Abstract #: 328

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Abstract Title: Hit Run to Go Back to the Schedule! Evaluation of Behavioral Strategies for Effective Use of Programmable Thermostats in Multifamily Affordable Housing

Abstract Text:

This field pilot tested two behavioral interventions designed to increase the effective use of programmable thermostats by low-income tenants who pay for utility bills. The target behaviors included using set back schedules in the winter heating months at night when tenants are asleep and during the daytime when tenants are not at home. Both the treatment and control groups received programmable thermostats and the treatment groups also received customized thermostat settings based on their stated schedules and preferences. One treatment group was asked to commit to keep using the schedules during the winter. The experiment was designed to respond: if the treatment groups are more likely to use and maintain manual and programmed setbacks in comparison to the control group, and if the group that was asked to commit to their preferred schedules had lower average nighttime and lower average daytime indoor temperatures than the other groups. Focus groups were held prior to implementing the field pilot to determine the values of the target population, and to test the effectiveness of messaging that was used to prompt tenants to resume their programmed schedules. This presentation will discuss the results of the experiment and the focus group findings.