

Electric Conservation Tips

Ten percent of the average US household's electric use is caused by unused electronics that are plugged into the wall. Here are some tips for conserving electricity in your home and managing unused electronics, commonly referred to as "Vampire Loads".

LIGHTING



- If left on constantly, an LED light could last for up to 50,000 hours, or 6 years, which is 50 times longer than a regular 60-watt incandescent bulb.



- Bathroom vanity lights are one of the most used fixtures in the average home. Use energy-efficient lighting, which can provide bright, warm light while using less energy and generating less heat than standard bulbs.



- Choose light colors for furniture. Light colors reflect light. Dark colors absorb light and require higher bulb wattages.



- Clean lighting fixtures regularly. Dust on lamps, reflectors, and light bulbs impair lighting efficiency.

CONSUMER ELECTRONICS



- If your family has a lot of cell phones or other portable electronics that require regular charging, establish a charging station situated along a power strip. This way all chargers and batteries can be easily found in the same spot, and, when fully charged, you can efficiently switch off the power, avoiding unnecessary vampire electric leakage.



- Unplug infrequently or seasonally used power supplies.



- Consolidate multiple power supplies on a single power strip so that the power can be turned off easily with one switch.



- When leaving for extended time from home, unplug TV's, cable boxes, PC's and other devices that won't be in use while you are away.



- Buy ENERGY STAR®-labeled electronics. Make sure you are using the power management or "sleep" feature on ENERGY STAR® qualified home office equipment (PC, fax, printer, scanner), so that they automatically power down when not in use to save up to \$70 annually in electricity bills and improve product longevity.



- An ENERGY STAR® computer uses 70% less electricity than computers without this designation. If left inactive, ENERGY STAR® computers enter a low-power mode and use 15 watts or less. Spending a large portion of time in low-power mode not only saves energy, but helps equipment run cooler and last longer.



- Turn off your computer, monitor and laptop at night and weekends. Turning them on and off doesn't shorten the lifetime of present-day computers.



- Configure your computer to "hibernate" automatically after 30 minutes or so of inactivity. The "hibernate mode" turns the computer off in a way that doesn't require you to reload everything when you switch it back on. Allowing your computer to hibernate saves energy and is more time-efficient than shutting down and restarting your computer from scratch.



- Iron fabrics that require a cooler iron first and work up to those requiring higher heat. An iron heats faster than it cools, so it's quicker to go from low to high than the reverse. You'll use less energy. Turn off the iron a few minutes before you finish ironing and complete the rest of your clothes with the heat remaining in the iron.



- Dry your hair with a towel instead of blow drying it. Many hair dryers consume as much energy as an electric toaster.



Maintaining a Conservation Friendly Temperature in Your Home

Your thermostat controls heating and cooling which consumes more than half of the energy in your home.

HEATING



- In winter, a thermostat set at 68 degrees or lower during the day when the home is occupied is recommended. Your kilowatt-hour usage for heating increases approximately 3% for each degree of temperature setting above 68 degrees.



- Lower the thermostat a degree or two before you entertain a large group of people.



- Keep your fireplace chimney damper closed when you are not using the fireplace.



- Open window shades, drapes and/or blinds that receive direct sunlight during the day.



- Close shades, drapes and/or blinds at night.



- Use bath and kitchen exhaust fans only when needed during the heating season. Fans draw heated air out of your home.



- Use space heaters as little as possible, as they are very expensive to operate.



- Close dampers on unused fireplaces.



- Use kitchen, bath and other ventilating fans sparingly. In just one hour, these fans can exhaust a house of warm air.



- Close vents and doors to unused rooms. Avoid heating un-insulated areas such as garages and crawl spaces. Keep your garage door closed as much as possible.



- Wear layers of clothing and use extra blankets.

NATURAL GAS HEATING



- The recommended thermostat control setting for your furnace is 68 degrees F during the heating season or a range of 65–72 degrees.



- Set your thermostat back by 5 or 10 degrees when sleeping or when your house is empty for more than four hours.



- Regularly change your furnace filter. Contact maintenance for assistance or to report any issues with your heating system.



- Keep heating vents clear of furniture and draperies and keep dampers open.



- Vacuum dust and pet fur from warm-air registers and cold-air returns.



- Remove dust and lint from registers, vents, and baseboard heaters.

COOLING



- Energy Star, a federal program managed by the Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), recommends the optimal energy efficient home operating setpoint of 78 degrees during the day and 82 degrees or higher while sleeping.



- In summer, a thermostat set at 78 degrees is recommended if the home is occupied. Your kilowatt-hour usage for cooling increases approximately 3% for each degree of temperature setting below 78 degrees. During unoccupied hours, turn off the air conditioner.



- When adjusting the thermostat, remember that the house will not warm up or cool down any faster if you crank up the thermostat past the desired temperature.



- Leave window shades, drapes and/or blinds closed during the day to keep out direct sunlight during hot periods.



- Use ceiling fans. Also run kitchen and bath exhaust fans long enough to rid the house of unwanted vapor, smoke and odors. Running them too long allows cool air to escape.



- Avoid using evaporative coolers or humidifiers at the same time an air conditioner is running.



- Try to use the oven, dishwasher and other appliances that produce heat during the late evening and early morning.



- A thermostat should not be located by household items that can produce heat (i.e. lamp, stereo, television).



- Replace filters more frequently if there are pets in the home.



- Open windows during the moderate weather of spring and fall to admit outside air for cooling instead of operating air conditioning equipment.











- Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothes.















Saving Energy in the Kitchen

Across America, home refrigerators use the electricity of 25 large power plants every year.





APPLIANCES

-  • Use pots and pans with absolutely flat bottoms on your range. To cook efficiently, heat must transfer directly from the surface element to the pan. Warped bottoms leave an air gap which provides an escape route for heat.
-  • Select pots and pans that are the right size to completely cover the surface element. When any part of the surface element is exposed, you're wasting heat and energy.
-  • Keep reflector pans beneath surface elements shiny and clean. Shiny pans reflect heat rays onto pan bottoms. Dull pans absorb the heat.
-  • Develop the habit of "lids on" cooking. Tight-fitting lids help keep heat in a pan, permitting you to use lower temperature settings and shorter cooking times.
-  • Start vegetables on high heat in a covered pan. When steam appears around the lid, lower the heat setting and allow food to simmer until done.
-  • Plan one-dish meals in a slow cooker. Such meals require less energy than those calling for the use of the oven plus two or three surface elements.
-  • Make more use of your pressure cooker. It cuts cooking time to one-third that of conventional methods.
-  • Consider cooking small quantities of food in appliances such as an electric toaster oven, skillet or grill instead of your oven. Portable appliances generally use about one third the electricity of your oven. Also, consider using smaller coffee makers if you only want one or two cups of coffee.

APPLIANCES (cont.)

-  • Use your microwave oven instead of your conventional electric oven whenever possible. Microwaves can cook food in one-fourth or less the normal cooking time.
-  • Prepare your whole meal in the oven at the same time. Often you can simultaneously cook foods that have different cooking temperatures. Variations of 25 degrees usually produce favorable cooking results.
-  • Carefully time your preheat period when baking. Generally, five to eight minutes is sufficient. There is no need to preheat for broiling, roasting or cooking most casseroles.
-  • Rearrange oven shelves before turning on the oven to prevent wasteful heat escape.
-  • Avoid opening the oven door for a “peek” when baking. Each time you open the door, a considerable portion of the heat escapes.
-  • Use the outside barbecue grill whenever possible. This will keep the heat out of the kitchen. Barbecuing can also be a fun time for the whole family.
-  • Gas flames from your stove should burn with a clear blue color. A yellow flame may indicate that your burner isn't operating efficiently.
-  • Fill a dishpan with rinse water instead of letting the faucet run while you do dishes by hand.
-  • Use cold water when operating your garbage disposal. It saves energy and solidifies the grease, which is then ground up and flushed away.
-  • Activate the self-cleaning cycle on your electric oven only when the oven is heavily soiled. Start the cycle right after using the oven while it is still hot.
-  • Be sure to place the faucet lever on the kitchen sink in the cold position when using small amounts of water; placing the lever in the hot position uses energy to heat the water even though it may never reach the faucet.
-  • Cooking water and fish tank water are both excellent for watering plants.

COOKING AND CLEANING

-  • Use energy-saving cycles. Apply the no-heat, air-dry feature. If your dishwasher does not have this feature, turn it off after the final rinse cycle and open the door so that the dishes can air dry.
-  • Wash full loads only.
-  • Proper amounts of detergent can eliminate a second wash. Fill your dishwasher according to the manufacturer's instructions so that proper water flow cleans dishes thoroughly.
-  • Always choose the shortest washing cycle that will clean your dishes and scrape off heavy food accumulated before loading dishes into the dishwasher.

COOKING AND CLEANING (cont.)



- Use your dishwasher's "power-saver switch" if it has one to automatically eliminate the drying cycle.



- On hot days, wait to use your dishwasher until night. You will avoid adding heat in the house during the hottest time of the day.



- Set your dishwasher to "air-dry".

REFRIGERATORS AND FREEZERS



- Keep your refrigerator and freezer at the right temperature. The refrigerator should be between 38° F and 42° F and the freezer between 0° F and 5° F.



- Vacuum condenser coils in the back or at the bottom of your refrigerator every three months or so. Dust-covered coils impair the efficiency of compressor operation and increase energy use.



- Discard old or extra refrigerators.



- Don't open the refrigerator longer or more often than necessary. Decide what you want before you open the door.



- Let hot items cool before placing them in the refrigerator.



- Defrost the freezer regularly.



- Make sure refrigerators and freezers have tight-fitting door gaskets to prevent infiltration to warm air.



- Keep refrigerators and freezers filled to capacity but don't overcrowd to the point where air cannot circulate freely around food.



- Empty or nearly empty refrigerators do not operate efficiently. Use water containers or bags of ice cubes to fill empty space.



- Turn down your refrigerator and remove perishables before going on an extended vacation.







- Refrigerators and freezers in the garage or outside can be a real energy hog. High temperatures make your refrigerator or freezer use much more energy, which adds to your electricity bills. Consider disconnecting them at least for the summer or moving them to an air-conditioned area.






Saving Energy in the Laundry Room

About 90% of the energy used for washing clothes is for heating the water.

WASHERS

-  • Washing a load of clothes uses about 30 gallons of water. Sort clothes and schedule laundry so you can wash only full loads. It takes almost as much electricity to run a small load as it does a full one.
-  • Wash clothes in cold water whenever possible. Not only does it save on water heating costs, it keeps your home cooler.
-  • Select the correct water level for each load. Don't use too much detergent. Over suds make your washer work harder and may require a second wash to remove the excess soap. Avoid a second wash by using a presoak product on heavily soiled fabrics.
-  • Wash clothing using cold water cycles whenever possible.

DRYERS

-  • Dry your clothes outside on a clothesline or inside on a rack instead of putting them in the dryer, this could save your family almost \$40 annually. this could save your family almost \$40 annually.
-  • Separate heavier clothes (towels, heavy cottons) from the lightweight fabrics (synthetics) for more efficient drying.
-  • Dry only full loads in your dryer but don't overload. It causes excessive wrinkling.

DRYERS (cont.)



- Dry two or more loads in a row.



- Use automatic dryer settings, which save energy when compared to a timed cycle.



- Remove clothes from the dryer as soon as it stops, before wrinkles have time to set. Clothes you promptly fold or place on hangers require little or no ironing so you can save electricity as well as your own energy.



- Don't add wet clothes during the drying cycle.



- Clean the lint filter after each use and you can maximize airflow and efficiency.



- Keep dryer vents free of lint. A clogged vent wastes energy.



- Select the proper setting and time for the type and size load.



Saving Energy in the Bathroom

More than 45% of water use in the average American home occurs in the bathroom with 27% being used by toilets. Older toilets can use up to 7 gallons per flush.

FAUCETS



- Turn off running water when shaving or brushing your teeth.



- Recommend asking for assistance from maintenance. 2.5 gallons/minute is extremely high. 1 gal/minute or less is ideal.

FAUCETS



- Report any leaks immediately to management. A single dripping faucet can waste more water in a single day than one person needs for drinking in an entire week.



- Instead of running water each time you want a drink, keep a jug of cool water in your refrigerator.

SHOWERS



- Replace showerheads with type limiting flow to 2.5 gal/minute is high. You can get much lower flow shower heads that still have good water pressure. 2 gal or 1.8 gal low flow units are ideal.



- Encourage family members to take short showers instead of tub baths. The average person uses about half as much hot water in a shower as in a tub.

TOILETS



- Avoid unnecessary flushing. Dispose of tissues, insects and other waste in the trash.



- Report any leaks immediately to management.

HOW TO TEST YOUR TOILETS FOR A SECRET LEAK:

- Put 10 drops of food coloring in the tank.
- Don't flush for 15 minutes.
- If the colored water shows up in the bowl, you have a leak.

