Conserving electricity IS GOOD FOR YOUR WALLET and THE PLANET

Think about the electricity you use. Simple changes in your everyday life can make all the difference for the world.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Here are some tips to help you conserve.

When it’s hot outside
- Turn your air conditioner off when you leave home.
- Make sure your air conditioner is the right size for the room or apartment. Bigger isn’t better.
- When it’s time to cook, grill outside and keep your oven off.
- On breezy days or when the outdoor temperature is below 70 degrees, open your windows and keep the air conditioner off.
- Install your air conditioner out of the sun, if possible. They work better in shady areas.

When it’s cold outside
- If you can’t install storm windows, use a plastic window kit to cut drafts and seal in heat.
- Health permitting, set your thermostat to 60 degrees during the day and 60 degrees at night and when no one is home.
- Instead of turning up the heat, wear a sweater and add a blanket.
- Install a programmable thermostat and program it to turn down the heat at night and when no one is home.
- If your windows are well insulated, open the curtains and blinds on sunny days to let the sun in and close them at night to keep the heat in.
- Keep drapes or furniture away from radiators and baseboard heaters so heat can flow freely.
- Clean or replace filters for your hot-air furnace and heat pump every month during the heating season, or use filters made to run 6 to 12 months before needing replacement.
- Use ceiling fans to circulate warm air in winter, especially in rooms with high ceilings.
- Close doors and warm-air vents in unused rooms, but in extreme cold, be aware of water pipes that could freeze and burst.
- If you have a hot-water heating system, release any trapped air from radiators.
- Radiators can lose heat into exterior walls. Reduce this loss by placing reflectors between the wall and the radiator.
- Use an efficient humidifier to maintain comfortable humidity levels and help you conserve heat. Proper humidity helps you feel comfortable without turning up the heat.
- Inspect and clean your air conditioner filters at least once a month.
- Don’t air-condition an empty room. If you have central air-conditioning, close the vents in unoccupied rooms.
- Install a programmable thermostat or use a timer to turn on your air conditioner a half hour before you return home rather than running it all day.
- When it’s cooler, instead of turning up the heat, wear a sweater or blanket.
- Use extra space, add bags of ice.
- Loose containers in the refrigerator so air can circulate around it. In the freezer, pack items tightly. If there’s extra space, add bags of ice.
- Open the refrigerator and freezer doors only when necessary.
- Use the Energy-saving setting for all appliances, particularly your refrigerator, air conditioner, clothes washer, dryer, and oven.
- Use the refrigerator at 40 degrees— but no higher—and freezer to zero degrees.
- When buying a new furnace or boiler, look for the ENERGY STAR label.
- Wrap with insulation any hot-water pipes that pass through unheated spaces.

Choose energy-efficient appliances

ENERGY STAR-qualified appliances use 10 to 50% less electricity than standard models. They may cost more, but ENERGY STAR products save you money over the lifetime of the equipment.

A list of ENERGY STAR-qualified products is available at www.energystar.gov.

Also look for the yellow EnergyGuide label to help you compare the efficiency of different major appliances. It tells you how much electricity the appliance uses and estimates how much it costs to operate.


Appliances
- Set your refrigerator to 40 degrees—but no higher—and freezer to zero degrees.
- Loosely store food in the refrigerator so air can circulate around it. In the freezer, pack items tightly. If there’s extra space, add bags of ice.
- Open the refrigerator and freezer doors only when necessary.
- Use the Energy-saving setting for all appliances, particularly your refrigerator, air conditioner, clothes washer, dryer, and oven.
- Use less water in the dishwasher.
- Keep your clothes dryer clean.
- Wrap your hot-water storage tank with an insulation blanket, even if it’s a newer model.
- Keep hot-air vents clean.
- Wrap your hot-water storage tank with an insulation blanket, even if it’s a newer model.
- Use a microwave rather than an electric or gas oven as much as possible. Microwave use less than half the power of traditional ovens.
- Use outdoor electronics with a protocol and motion sensor so they go on only at night and when someone is present.

Use power strips for electronics

Most electronic equipment continues to use electricity even when turned off. When electronic equipment is plugged in but not in use, it uses up to 10 percent of the electricity used in most homes.

The instant-on or standby feature on TV, cable boxes and modems, DVD and CD players, and computers wastes electricity, costs you money, and hurts the environment. A TV with a remote, for example, can use more energy during the 20 hours it’s turned off that it does the four hours you watch it.

To prevent them from using power when not in use, plug your TVs, cable boxes and modems, computers, monitors, and other home-entertainment and computer equipment into power strips. This way, it’s an easy switch to turn power on and off.

Also, when you use your computer, set it to “hibernate” when it’s not in use for 30 minutes. Turn off all monitors if you plan to leave them on for more than 20 minutes. Screen savers use electricity.

Instead of turning up the heat in winter, WEAR A SWEATER AND ADD A BLANKET.