

# Tips for Reducing Your Electric Bill

## UNPLUG

- Unplug seldom-used appliances, like an extra refrigerator in the basement or garage that contains just a few items. You may save around \$10 every month on your utility bill.
- Unplug your chargers when you're not charging. Every house is full of little plastic power supplies to charge cell phones, digital cameras, cordless tools and other personal gadgets. Keep them unplugged until you need them.
- Use power strips to switch off televisions when you're not using them. Even when you think these products are off, together, their "standby" consumption can be equivalent to that of a 75 or 100 watt light bulb running continuously.

## SET COMPUTERS TO SLEEP AND HIBERNATE

- Enable the "sleep mode" feature on your computer, allowing it to use less power during periods of inactivity. In Windows, the power management settings are found on your control panel. Mac users, look for energy saving settings under system preferences in the apple menu.
- Enable 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. When you're done for the day, shut down.

## REFRIGERATORS/FREEZERS

- Set your refrigerator temperature at 34° to 37° F; your freezer should be set between 0° and 5° F.
- Make sure the door seals tightly. You can check this by making sure that a dollar bill closed in between the door gaskets is difficult to pull out. If it slides easily between the gaskets, replace them.
- Use the energy-saving setting on the refrigerator.
- Keep the refrigerator and freezer stocked; it takes more energy to cool an empty fridge or partially filled freezer. If your freezer isn't full, you can fill 2-liter bottles about three-quarters full and put them in the freezer to take up space.
- Close the refrigerator door promptly once you've gotten what you need from it.
- Clean refrigerator coils annually.

## WASHERS/DRYERS/DISHWASHERS

- Wash only full laundry loads. In your clothes washer, set the appropriate water level for the size of the load; wash in cold water when practical, and always rinse in cold. About 80 percent of the energy used for washing clothes is heating the water.
- Use bath towels at least twice before washing them.
- Clean the lint filter in the dryer after each use. Dry heavy and light fabrics separately and don't add wet items to a load that's already partly dry. If available, use the moisture sensor setting. In warmer weather, a clothesline is the most energy-efficient clothes dryer of all!
- Make sure outdoor dryer exhaust door closes when dryer is off.

- Wash only full loads in your dishwasher, using short cycles for all but the dirtiest dishes. This saves water and the energy used to pump and heat it. Air-drying, if you have the time, can also reduce energy use.

## **WHEN COOKING**

- Turn off your electric oven or stove shortly before the end of the required cooking time; the heating element will still be hot enough to finish the cooking process.
- Cover pots to reduce heat loss.
- Do not heat a small pot on a large burner.
- Thaw or partially thaw frozen food in the refrigerator prior to cooking.
- Replace drip pans periodically. Dirty drip pans are much less reflective than new pans and cannot reflect as much heat back up to the pan being heated.
- Avoid opening the oven door unnecessarily. Instead, view the food through the door's window and use a timer to help you determine when the food will be fully cooked. Most foods are fully cooked when the fragrance of the food begins to fill the room from within the oven. Every time you open the oven door while something is cooking, the temperature drops up to 100 degrees and oven has to use additional energy to bring the temperature back up.
- Use a microwave or toaster oven for cooking small items, instead of turning on the large oven.
- Lower the oven temperature by 25 degrees when cooking with ceramic, glass or stainless steel dishes.
- Check the seal on the oven door, and use a microwave oven for cooking or reheating small items.

## **TURN OUT THE LIGHTS**

- Don't forget to flick the switch when you leave a room.
- Lighting accounts for about 15 percent of household energy use. If you swap the five standard light bulbs you use most for energy-saving compact fluorescents, you can save on electricity.

## **WATER HEATER**

- Unless you have a newer water heater that already has built-in insulation, covering your water heater with an insulated "jacket" will keep costs down, especially if it's located in an unheated part of the house.
- Set water heater temperature no higher than 120° F. For households with 1 or 2 members, a 115° F setting may work fine.

## **BATHROOMS**

- Encourage your family to take showers rather than baths, showers use about half as much hot water. Limit shower length to 5 – 7 minutes.
- Repair leaky faucets and toilets (5 percent of water "use" is leakage).
- Install low-flow shower heads. A water-efficient shower head can use 25% to 50% less hot water, saving both on water and power bills.
- Turn the faucet off while shaving or brushing teeth, instead of letting it run.
- Use nightlights with sensors in areas where you need just enough lighting to see where you are going. The sensor will shut the nightlight off when it's bright enough to see normally.