

Energy efficiency is one of the easiest ways to lower your energy consumption as well as your monthly bills, and make your home more comfortable and weatherproof. We've put together this fact sheet to help consumers start saving money now!

## ***Easy Energy Saving Tips***

- Turn the lights off. A single 100-watt incandescent bulb uses \$1.65 worth of electricity each month. If you leave many lights on for long periods of time, the cost adds up quickly.
- Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents (CFLs). CFLs normally last about 10 times longer and can save you \$45 in purchase and operating costs over the bulb's lifetime.
- Electric baseboard heaters can be easily turned off or turned down in rooms where heat is not needed.
- When doing laundry, if you switch to cold water and wash one load a day, you could save about \$16 each month.
- The fan in a large oil furnace fan can easily consume \$50 of electricity in a month if running 24/7. Switch the fan to the "Auto" setting and significantly reduce this amount.



- Adjusting your thermostat can bring substantial savings. During the winter, keeping your thermostat set at 68 degrees (instead of 72) can decrease your heating costs by about 21%. During the summer, keeping your thermostat set at 78 degrees (instead of 72) can decrease cooling costs by about 40%. For an average four-ton heat pump or air conditioner, these strategies can save about \$170 during the winter and \$130 during the summer.

- Make sure your heating and cooling systems operate efficiently. The most important things you can do are changing your filters and making sure your outdoor unit is not blocked by leaves, debris or snow. A dirty filter on a heat pump can use excess auxiliary heat and drive up your electric bill. If you suspect that your system is not working properly, have it checked by a professional!
- Unplug extra, unneeded freezers or refrigerators. Older models can cost between \$10 and \$20 per month to operate. The cost is significantly higher if the refrigerator or freezer is in a garage or shed.
- If you are away most of the day, programmable thermostats can save money, especially for homeowners who have oil, gas, and electric furnaces. Aggressive settings might save 10% to 30% on heating bills. For homeowners with heat pumps, programmable thermostat savings are much more modest.
- A small space heater left on the high setting can consume about \$100 in a month if left on continuously, so use it only when needed. Space heaters are effective at providing some heat in an area but if left on for long periods of time can waste a lot of energy.
- Computers use relatively little power, but most people can save several dollars a month by turning off their computers and related equipment when not in use.
- Water heating is usually the second largest energy consumer in the home. Inexpensive ways to reduce hot water consumption include installing low flow showerheads, turning down the temperature on the water heater to 120 degrees, taking shorter showers, and insulating the hot water tank. The cost savings will vary but could easily add up to \$16 per month for a family of four.
- If you don't have storm or thermal windows, cover the inside of your windows tightly with plastic from a discount or hardware store.
- Caulk or weather strip around doors and windows to seal out cold air. In addition to potential cost savings, a well-sealed home will make the interior space more comfortable.
- Remove window air conditioning units to reduce drafts. If this isn't possible, cover all sides of the unit to minimize leakage.

- Air dry dishes instead of using your dishwasher's drying cycle.

- When drying clothes, use your dryer's automatic drying feature (if there is one) instead of time drying. Be sure that your dryer vent is not clogged!



- Take advantage of the sun's energy by opening window shades on sunny days on south facing glass in the winter. In the summer do the opposite: close shades and blinds to keep out the sun's energy.

## **Maryland PIRG** **Foundation**

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