

Energy Saving Tips



Contra Costa County Community Services Bureau Home Energy Assistance Program

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Clean Up Your Laundry Habits

- o Wash your clothes in cold water using cold-water detergents whenever possible.
- o Wash and dry full loads. If you are washing a small load, use the appropriate water-level setting.
- o Dry towels and heavier cottons in a separate load from lighter-weight clothes.
- o Clean the lint filter in the dryer after every load to improve air circulation.
- o Use the cool-down cycle to allow the clothes to finish drying with the residual heat in the dryer.

Conserving Water

- o Report leaks immediately. A leaking faucet can waste hundreds of gallons of water a year; if it's hot water, that's energy down the drain.
- o Avoid letting hot water run constantly while washing dishes, shaving, brushing teeth, etc.
- o Take more showers than baths. Bathing uses the most hot water in the average household. You use 15 to 25 gallons of hot water for a bath, but less than 10 gallons during a 5-minute shower.
- o Water heating is the third largest energy expense in your home, typically accounting for about 14% of your utility bill. Shorter showers, more efficient showerheads and turning water off between tasks can help to decrease this expense.

Shut It Off !

- o Computers and particularly laser printers can really run up your power bills. Keep your printer turned off using the switch on the printer, when not in use. Some printers take as much power as 660 watts, the same as keeping a small microwave oven cooking continuously! If you are going to be away from the computer for an hour, turn it off as you will save more power in that hour than that used to power one 14 watt compact fluorescent lamp for 24 hours!

When purchasing new appliances and electronics, choose Energy Star ®-Certified models.

Contra Costa County

Home Energy Assistance Program

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Weatherization

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Easy Energy Saving Tips

- o In the winter, turn your thermostats down to 68 degrees or below. Reduce the setting to 55 degrees before going to sleep or when leaving for the day. *(For each 1 degree you turn down the thermostat in the winter, you'll save up to 5% on your heating costs.)*
- o Turn off and un-plug non-essential lights and appliances.
- o Avoid running large appliances such as washers, dryers, and electric ovens during peak energy demand hours from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- o Close shades and blinds at night to reduce the amount of heat lost through windows. This also applies during the day for warm climates.
- o When you leave the room, turn off the lights!

Put a Lid on Cooking Costs

- o In gas appliances, look for blue flames. Yellow flames indicate the gas is burning inefficiently and an adjustment may be needed. Consult your local utility.
- o Keep range-top burners and reflectors clean. They will reflect the heat better, and you will save energy.
- o Use a covered kettle or pan to boil water. It is faster and it uses less energy.
- o Match the size of the pan to the size of the heating element.
- o If you cook with electricity, turn the stovetop burners off several minutes before

the allotted cooking time. The heating element will stay hot long enough to finish the cooking without using more electricity. The same principle applies to oven cooking.

- o Use small electric pans /toaster ovens for small meals rather than your large stove or oven. A toaster oven uses a third to half as much energy as a full-sized oven.
- o Use pressure cookers and microwave ovens whenever it is convenient to do so. They can save energy by significantly reducing cooking time.
- o Scrape off, don't rinse off, large food pieces and bones. Soaking or prewashing is generally only recommended in cases of burned-on or dried-on food.
- o Be sure your dishwasher is full, but not overloaded.
- o Don't use the "rinse hold" function on your machine for just a few soiled dishes. It uses 3 to 7 gallons of hot water each time you use it.
- o Let your dishes air dry. If you don't have an automatic air-dry switch, turn off the control knob after the final rinse and prop the door open a little so the dishes will dry faster.
- o Don't keep your refrigerator or freezer too cold. Recommended temperatures are 37 to 40 degrees F for the fresh food compartment of the refrigerator and 5 degrees F for the freezer section.
- o Cover liquids and wrap foods stored in the refrigerator. Uncovered foods release moisture and make the compressor work harder.

- o Move your refrigerator away from the wall and vacuum the condenser coils once a year unless you have a no-clean condenser model. Your refrigerator will run for shorter periods with clean coils.

Be Bright About Lighting

- o Reduce hours of usage by turning off lights not in use.
- o Use fluorescent lighting whenever possible. A 25-watt fluorescent light produces the same amount of light as about a 75-watt incandescent bulb and saves energy by using only 25 watts of energy; it also produces less heat.
- o Use three-way bulbs in lamps, where possible. The low switch settings can be used when high levels of light are not needed for reading, etc..
- o When buying a light bulb, consider its use. Choose low wattage bulbs for closets, hallways or areas where quality work or vision is not affected.

