

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.

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.