

Here's a checklist of energy-saving measures that cost little or nothing and will return big savings on your energy bills. They are easy to implement, whether you own or rent your work space.

- Turn lights, computers, and other equipment off when they are not in use. This is easy to do, once you think about it. Let workers know that you appreciate their help in this effort. Computers often have an energy-saver mode, but workers sometimes disable it. Consider adding automatic controls, too, such as programmable thermostats, timers, and occupancy sensors. A programmable thermostat can cut heating and cooling costs by a third, compared to a building that does not use energy-saving settings.
- Share your enthusiasm for saving energy with workers and customers. Post energy-saving tips for workers, and reward them for useful suggestions. Consider posting small signs to request customer support on closing doors, turning off bathroom lights, and shutting off faucets. You can also show your community spirit by letting people know you support local energy and environmental programs, or purchase green power.
- Regularly change or clean filters in heating, ventilating, and cooling (HVAC) equipment. During peak heating or cooling season, change or clean filters monthly. They usually cost about \$3, but a new filter can save \$5 or more per month. You will also enjoy the cleaner air.
- Have a contractor clean and tune your HVAC system annually. This will increase operating efficiency and may prevent costly emergency repairs.
- Use fans whenever possible. Ceiling fans, which gently move room air, add comfort and save energy. According to Energy Star, you can raise summer air-conditioning temperatures by 3 to 5 degrees with no loss of comfort if you add ceiling fans. Every degree raised on the thermostat typically saves about 3 percent on cooling costs. Switch reversible fans in winter, to pull cool air upward and force warm, risen air back downward.
- When replacing lights, use compact fluorescent lamps in place of incandescent bulbs, and use lower-wattage fluorescent tubes in place of old fluorescent tubes. Compact fluorescent lamps last up to 10 times longer and use a fraction of the energy compared to incandescent bulbs. Look for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star label to assure the highest quality. With fluorescent tubes, take the extra step of changing the ballast, which holds the tube and controls voltage, from a magnetic to electronic model. Then you will save on the energy the ballast requires, plus you can use newer T8 or T5 tubes.

- If you have exit signs, switch to new light-emitting diode (LED) signs. They pay for themselves through energy savings in three years or less.
- Control direct sunlight through windows. In summer, block it, using blinds, screens, film, or outdoor awnings, vines, and trees. In cold weather, reverse your thinking. As long as you control glare, the sun can bring welcome warmth in winter.
- Perform basic weatherization. This includes repairing holes and cracks that let in drafts and weather-stripping or caulking around doors and windows. It also includes plugging leaks and fixing gaps in insulation on ducts and pipes.
- Save water to save energy. Water-saving measures, from fixing leaky faucets and toilets to adding water-saving showerheads and aerators, will pay you back on your water bills, and by saving hot water on energy bills.

And one more tip: remember to think about energy when you shop for any new equipment, lighting, or building renovations. The easiest approach is to look for the Energy Star label.

Energy Star is a program co-sponsored by the EPA and numerous business partners to help promote energy-wise purchasing decisions. The program started in 1992. Today, it saves consumers more than \$14 billion per year, based on the energy savings represented by Energy Star purchases, compared to standard purchases in over 50 product categories. In general, Energy Star products use about one-third less energy than comparable standard products. Energy Star also saves consumers in terms of avoided pollution and avoided greenhouse gas emissions. Check out the Web site, www.EnergyStar.gov, to find useful advice on buying lighting, HVAC equipment, computers, copy machines, printers, and dozens more products that you need for your business.

Top Tips for Saving Energy in Your Home

Here's a checklist of energy-saving measures that cost little or nothing, but can return real savings on your energy bills. These measures are easy to take, whether you own or rent your home.

1 Turn lights, appliances, and electronics off when they are not in use. Today's larger homes have a lot of rooms where operating TVs, radios, computers, and lights may be forgotten. Unplug idle power adapters and cell-phone chargers, too, or use a power strip with a switch for convenience. For outdoor lights, install motion sensors or a combination of photo sensors to turn lights on and timers to turn them off.

2 Replace at least five incandescent light bulbs with high-efficiency, compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs). Energy Star labeled CFLs use 75 percent less energy and last six to ten times longer than standard incandescent bulbs do. A CFL that uses 13 to 17 watts will give as much light as a 60-watt incandescent bulb. Today's CFLs come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and tints.

3 Install a programmable thermostat. In winter, lower the temperature when you are typically at work or asleep. You can save about 5 percent on your heating bill if your setback averages out to two degrees around the clock. The reverse is true in summer: a higher thermostat setting will save you money. As you program your thermostat, remember to give it a little time to warm or cool the whole house to your comfort level.

4 Regularly change or clean filters in heating and cooling equipment. During peak heating or cooling season, change or clean filters monthly. A new filter may cost about \$3, but can save you \$5 or more per month. You will also enjoy the cleaner air.

5 Use fans. According to Energy Star, you can raise summer air-conditioner settings by 3 to 5 degrees with no loss of comfort if you add ceiling

fans. Switch reversible fans in winter, to pull cool air upward and force warm air back down.

6 Control direct sunlight through windows. In the summer, block it using blinds, screens, film, outdoor awnings, vines, and trees. In cold weather, reverse your thinking. As long as you control glare, the sun can bring welcome warmth in winter.

7 Perform basic weatherization. This includes repairing holes and cracks that let in drafts and weather-stripping or caulking around doors and windows. It also includes plugging leaks and fixing gaps in insulation on ducts and pipes.

8 Try washing most clothes in cold water, and always rinse in cold. Clothes washed in cold water fade less, have fewer wrinkles, and may save up to a hundred dollars annually on water heating.

9 Don't overdry your clothes. Today, many clothes driers have energy-saving moisture sensors that shut off the heat when the clothes are dry. If you don't have this feature, test a few loads, and remember how long they take to dry. Running a typical drier for 15 minutes less per load can save you up to \$35 per year. Also, remember to clean the lint trap after every load.

10 If you have an old refrigerator or freezer that you barely use, unplug it. These old appliances can add up to 15 percent to your electric bill. You can save energy in your regular fridge by keeping the condenser coils clean, placing it in a well-ventilated, relatively cool spot, and keeping it full but not overloaded. If your freezer is usually empty, you can improve cold airflow by storing some extra ice.