



ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE TEAM

HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY 101

ENERGY CONSERVATION

As energy costs climb and environmental issues become increasingly pressing, it is crucial that we take action to cut our energy consumption. Making conscious choices now can lead to a more sustainable future for us all. Here are some tips to mitigate energy consumption:

- ENERGY STAR-certified products can reduce energy consumption by 25%. Look for these products when shopping for new models or products, as they are the most energy-efficient items on the market.
- Electronics continuously draw power while they are plugged in. Devices in standby or sleep mode still draw power when not in use. This can add up and contribute to 5-10% of your electricity bill. TVs, game consoles, and chargers are all examples of passive, or phantom, power consumption.
 - ∞ Unplug devices that are used seldomly, such as toasters, printers, guest room TVs, entertainment systems, etc.
 - ∞ Unplug and disconnect all appliances and devices before going on vacation or spending an extended period away from home.
- Smart power bars come with timers that can be programmed to disconnect power from devices at night. You can group these devices or appliances on one smart power extension cord and prevent them from drawing unnecessary power.
- Program your thermostat to reduce energy used to heat or cool your home when no one is home, and restore comfort levels when you return.
- Use caulk or weather stripping to seal any gaps or cracks in your walls or ceiling. This will keep cold air out in the winter and hot air in the summer. If you have a fireplace, you should close the damper when it is not being used.
- If the heating, cooling or water heating systems or appliances in your home are older, consider getting new ones. You should also make sure to regularly maintain your systems and appliances. For example, replace your HVAC filter every three months.



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BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES

With just a few simple changes to your daily habits, you can reduce your energy consumption and watch your utility bills shrink. Ready to make a difference? Here are some fun and effective ways to transform your routine and save that hard-earned cash:

- Turn off lights when you leave a room. Alternatively, you can install occupancy sensors. The sensors will detect when you leave the room and turn the lights off for you. You can also automatically turn any outdoor lights on and off using sensors and timers.
- Buy a pack of LED light bulbs and replace incandescent bulbs as they burn out. LED bulbs are approximately 6 times more efficient and last longer as well.
- Wash clothing in cold water.
- Dry heavier clothing items, such as denim or work wear, on a drying rack.
- Install a low-flow shower head to conserve water and reduce hot water demand.
- Maintain your HVAC system by cleaning, servicing, or replacing filters every 3 months so the unit isn't struggling to stay efficient.
- Cook meals outside instead of heating up the home in the kitchen during warmer months.
- Use a rain barrel to collect rainwater to irrigate your lawn or garden instead of using treated drinking water.
- Wrap your electric hot water tank with an insulating blanket to reduce heat loss.
- On cool days, take advantage of the sun's warmth by opening south-facing window blinds and shades. Close them at night.
- Your phone only requires a few hours to charge, so unplug your charger when the battery is full to curb some energy waste.
- You can help reduce demand on the electricity grid by running larger appliances like dishwashers, washing machines, or dryers at off-peak times. This reduces the strain on the grid and can lower the amount of electricity needed at peak times.
- The Rate of Last Resort is the default utility rate if you don't choose a rate plan. This rate is fixed for a set period by the province and could result in higher utility costs compared to other rate plans.
- If you want to learn more about the charges that make up your utility bill, the Government of Alberta's Utilities Consumer Advocate provides a helpful bill breakdown at <https://ucahelps.alberta.ca/your-utilities/electricity/understanding-your-bill/>



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For more tips, check out these resources:

Source: <https://natural-resources.canada.ca/energy-efficiency/building-energy-efficiency/retrofit-hub-funding-incentives>

Source: <https://natural-resources.canada.ca/energy-efficiency/home-energy-efficiency/make-your-home-more-energy-efficient>

Source: <https://natural-resources.canada.ca/energy-efficiency/home-energy-efficiency/make-small-changes-add>

Source: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/takeaction/>



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