

- ✓With electric burners, turn off just before cooking has completed, and the burner will continue to heat the food.

Oven

- ✓Keep oven preheating to a minimum. Generally, it's only necessary when making bread or pastries.
- ✓Arrange the shelves in the oven before turning it on.
- ✓Refrain from laying foil on oven racks. Food cooks faster when air can circulate.
- ✓Avoid peeking in the oven during baking. You lose 25 degrees every time you open the oven door.
- ✓Use glass or ceramic pans. They heat faster, allowing you to decrease the oven temperature by 25 degrees.
- ✓Use oven thermometers and timers to avoid overcooking.
- ✓Turn off the oven a few minutes before you expect the food to finish cooking and allow the residual heat to finish the job.

Small Appliances

- ✓Buy an iron with an automatic shut-off feature.
- ✓Use lowest setting while ironing that will smooth clothing.
- ✓Turn off all appliances when not in use.
- ✓Change vacuum bags frequently to reduce energy draw and increase suction.

For more information on how you can reduce your energy consumption to save money, contact your local utilities to request an energy analysis, energy conservation tips and find out if they offer any energy saving programs. You can also contact the following government agencies for more information and to obtain a free "Energy Savers" booklet:

Federal Consumer Information Center
1-888-878-3255
www.pueblo.gsa.gov/housing.htm

**U.S. Department of Energy
Consumer Energy Information**
www.eren.doe.gov/consumerinfo

Maryland Energy Administration
www.energy.state.md.us

About The Maryland Office of People's Counsel

The Office of People's Counsel (OPC) is an independent state agency that represents the interests of residential consumers of natural gas, electricity, telephone and certain other utility services before the Public Service Commission (PSC) and before certain federal regulatory agencies. As the state appointed utility consumer advocate, OPC works to ensure that residential consumers receive safe, reliable services at the lowest possible cost. OPC is the oldest consumer advocacy agency of its kind in the United States.

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Conservation TIPS

How to conserve
household
energy and
reduce your
monthly bills.



Heating and Cooling

Heating and cooling accounts for a large percentage of total energy use in the average home. In extreme weather, you may be tempted to overuse your heat or air conditioning systems. Consider the following tips to manage the indoor climate in your home.

- ✓ Use your thermostat wisely. For heating, set it at 65-75 degrees during the day and 60-65 degrees at night or when you are away from your home 8 hours or more. For cooling, set the thermostat no lower than 78 degrees.
- ✓ Protect your thermostat from drafts so that your furnace kicks in only when warmth is really needed.
- ✓ Look for energy leaks. You can discover drafts by putting your hand in front of a window or door base.
- ✓ If you find air leaks, seal with old rags, caulk, weather stripping and rolled up towels. Cover the inside of windows tightly with plastic.
- ✓ Insulate your basement, attic and crawl spaces. Install storm windows and doors.
- ✓ Check heating and cooling equipment at least once a year. Replace furnace filters three times per heating season, or per manufacturer's instruction. Replace filters in window air conditioning units regularly.
- ✓ Close doors to unoccupied rooms and close vents in those rooms when heat or central air conditioning is on.
- ✓ Keep air conditioning and heating units free from blockages.
- ✓ Wear hats, sweaters or comforters to retain body heat.

Water Heating

Heating water is second to space heating in consuming energy in the average home. In order to reduce the cost to heat water in your home, consider the following tips.

- ✓ Repair leaking faucets. Dollars may literally be going down the drain if your hot water heater must constantly run because of an ongoing leak.
- ✓ Don't overheat water. Turning the water heater down to 120 degrees or lower is fine, except for dish washing.
- ✓ Blanket all water heaters with an approved insulation jacket.
- ✓ Insulate hot water pipes.

Update Your Appliances

If you are replacing a heating system (furnace or heat pump), air conditioning (central air or window units), or appliances (refrigerator, freezer, washer, dryer), buying an energy efficient model, properly sized for your home, can reduce your energy bill. As an added incentive, you can get your new appliance tax free! Effective July 1, 2000, the Maryland sales tax on ENERGY STAR® labeled clothes washers, refrigerators, and room air conditioners was repealed. For a list of ENERGY STAR® products call 888-STAR-YES, or visit www.energystar.gov.

Do you need help updating your appliances? Your income may qualify you for assistance in repairing or replacing your furnace or refrigerator. Call 1-800-352-1446 (OHEP) or 1-800-492-7127 (WAP) for further information and a referral.

Refrigerator and Freezer

Refrigerator-freezers use almost 25% of all electricity in the average home. The following tips may help you reduce the draw on energy in your home.

- ✓ Use the most energy-efficient refrigerator you can and operate it properly.
- ✓ Check door gasket for tight seal. Leaking cold air costs money.
- ✓ Limit the number of times the doors are opened.
- ✓ Let hot items cool before placing them in the refrigerator.
- ✓ Remove dust from coils and cooling elements.
- ✓ Defrost freezer regularly.
- ✓ Keep refrigerator and freezers away from heat sources.

Washer

- ✓ Select the lowest temperature setting on clothes washers necessary to do the job.
- ✓ Wash one large load instead of two or three small loads.
- ✓ Use cold water for the rinse cycle.
- ✓ Select the correct water level for each load.

Dryer

- ✓ Clean lint vent after every use.
- ✓ Dry two or more loads in a row.
- ✓ Use automatic dryer settings, which save money when compared to timed dryer cycles.
- ✓ Dry full (but not overstuffed) loads.
- ✓ Use proper settings to avoid overdrying.

Light Smart

Lighting accounts for 5%-10% of total energy use in the average home. This can equal \$100-\$150 per year. Practicing the following tips might help you save some money.

- ✓ Use daylight whenever possible.
- ✓ For an instant room brightener, use light colors to decorate. Natural light will be reflected and will enable you to use lower wattage light bulbs.
- ✓ Clean your light bulbs to get more light per bulb.
- ✓ If you need to use artificial light more than three hours per day, consider using compact fluorescent light bulbs in place of typical "pear-shaped" incandescent bulbs. They last longer and give off more light per watt.
- ✓ Install dimmer switches so that incandescent lights can be used at a lower level.
- ✓ If you're not using the lights, turn them off.

Range

By changing your cooking habits you may be able to save energy and money! Consider the following tips.

- ✓ Use a toaster-oven, crockpot, or small microwave when cooking small to moderately sized meals.
- ✓ For soups and stews that require longer cooking times, use a crockpot.
- ✓ Use the smallest pan possible. Smaller pans require less energy.
- ✓ Clean burner pans reflect heat and use energy more efficiently than blackened burner pans.
- ✓ Cover pots to avoid heat loss.