



No-Cost / Low-Cost Ways to Cut Your Utility Bills

While a lighting upgrade is one of the most cost-effective steps you can take to save energy, boost your cash flow, and improve the look of your business, there are many other simple steps you can take in your facility to help reduce energy costs even more. These measures require little or no investment on your part, and can reap great energy benefits. So make sure you aren't throwing money down the drain, out the window, through cracks in your ducts ... and so on.

Consider implementing the simple changes on the list below that apply to your business:

NO-COST (General)

Lighting

- Turn off lights in unoccupied areas, when not in use, or when windows supply sufficient daylighting. Examples include break rooms, storage rooms, walk-in refrigerators and freezers.
- Make sure lighting controllers (time clocks, occupancy sensors and photocells) are set and working properly.
- Make sure exterior lights are off during the daytime.

HVAC

- Do not block air flow to HVAC vents to allow system to operate efficiently.
- Keep windows and doors closed while HVAC system is running.
- Set thermostat to 68 degrees (heating) and 78 degrees (cooling) when occupied.

Refrigeration

- Clean dirty condenser coils.
- Allow air flow around coils so that waste heat can dissipate; shield coils from the sun.
- Keep refrigerators loaded to reduce cycling; gallons jugs filled with water can serve this purpose well.

Office equipment

- Turn off equipment such as computers, monitors, copy machines, and printers when not in use, including each night and on weekends. Make sure to turn off desk lamps, coffee machines and desk fans too. Check cubicles and other areas to make sure "personal" heaters are turned off – these small heaters are often left on by accident, and surprisingly, represent a significant winter electric load in office buildings.

Shades and Blinds

- In winter, open shades and blinds during daylight hours. In summer, close shades during daylight hours in areas that experience heat buildup.

LOW-COST (General)

Lighting

- Replace incandescent lighting with Energy Star®-labeled compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs).
- Replace incandescent exit sign lamps with light-emitting diode (LED), CFL, or T1 cold cathode fluorescent (CCFL) exit sign lamps; or use the new luminescent (non-powered) exit signs.
- Reduce general overhead lighting by de-lamping, and use task lighting where needed. Lighting can be reduced more near windows.
- Replace any incandescent or halogen torchières with Energy Star® torchières.
- Install occupancy sensors in non-essential lighting areas.
- When standard halogen bulbs fail, replace with halogen infrared (HIR) that use 30% less energy.

(over)

HVAC

- Perform regular scheduled maintenance on units, including cleaning burners and air conditioner coils, cleaning and replacing air filters regularly, and checking ducts for leaks and pipe insulation for damage. Have your HVAC service person check the coolant charge, since an incorrect charge can make the unit work harder (and use more energy) to cool your air.
- Install an Energy Star®-labeled programmable thermostat, with a locking cover to prevent tampering.
- Replace HVAC air filters at least every three months.

Weatherization

- Make sure windows and doors are closing properly, maintain tight seals and remain closed. Add weatherstripping to doorways to reduce leakage and drafts.
- Insulate hot water lines where possible, especially in unconditioned spaces.

RESTAURANTS

NO-COST

- Be systematic about startup and shutdown of your appliances and cooking equipment.
- Reduce dishwasher usage: fully load the washer and turn off tank heaters when not in use.
- Turn off all fans when the building is unoccupied.
- Turn off exhaust hoods when the appliances under them are off.
- Maintain evaporative coolers—fan pumps and pads.

LOW-COST

- Install high-efficiency pre-rinse spray nozzles at dish wash stations to reduce water and natural gas usage.
- Maintain refrigerator doors by aligning them, replacing worn gaskets, enabling auto door-closers. Replace damaged strip curtains where present.
- Insulate refrigerant lines where possible.
- Install low-temperature occupancy sensors in walk-in refrigerators, to save on lighting costs.
- Remember to buy Energy-Star® and other high-efficiency equipment when replacing old appliances—the incremental cost is usually minor, and rebates are often available!

LIGHT INDUSTRIAL

NO-COST

- Turn off compressed air systems when not in use—especially nights and weekends.
- Do not use compressed air for cleaning; use blowers or sweep instead.

LOW-COST

- Distribute heating and cooling loads by installing ductwork to each machine or station, rather than conditioning large open spaces.

SCHOOLS

NO-COST

- Organize after-school activities for outdoors or to utilize as few heating/cooling zones as possible so that HVAC systems can be turned off.

LOW-COST

- Organize student activities to look at energy conservation opportunities and to track the school's energy performance.

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