

Cut Energy Use to Save Money

There are many ways to reduce your electric bill by making small changes in your habits and rethinking the way you use power.

Phantom Loads

Phantom load is the electricity consumed by a device when it is turned off.

An example would be when your television draws electricity as it waits for you to hit the “on” button with your remote. The clock on your stove and microwave uses electricity 24/7 to keep track of time. These devices have hidden energy costs that most people are not aware of.

The average home consumes about 450 kilowatt-hours a year through phantom loads. More examples of phantom loads are cell phone chargers, garage door openers, cordless

phones, electric shavers, CD players and cable TV receivers. Cubed shaped plugs, such as cell phone chargers, have a transformer that is between 60 percent and 80 percent inefficient.

To reduce phantom loads, plug your devices into a power strip and turn off the strip when you go to sleep or when your devices are not in use.

Other Ways to Save Energy:

- Change or clean your furnace filter once a month.
- Install a programmable thermostat.
- Don't let furniture and draperies block the air flow from air registers.
 - If your home has electric baseboard heating, be sure to keep furniture and draperies away from the heaters, and leave at least a 3-inch clearance under the heating unit.
 - Avoid using electric space heaters. They are expensive to operate.

- If your water heater is more than 15 years old, install an insulating wrap to reduce “standby” heat loss.

- In the winter, keep curtains and blinds closed at night to keep cold air out, but open them during the day to let the sun warm the room. In the summer, keep curtains and blinds closed in the daytime to keep the heat out.

- During the day and early evening, turn off unnecessary lights and wait to use heat-producing appliances.

- Plant a tree. One well-placed shade tree can reduce your summer cooling costs by 25 percent. Deciduous trees with high, spreading leaves and branches can be planted to the south of your home to provide maximum summertime roof shading.

- A ceiling fan should blow air down in the winter and up in the summer.

- When you go on vacation, lower the thermostat to 55 degrees in the winter. This will save energy while preventing water pipes from freezing. In the summer, set your thermostat as high as comfort permits.

- When you take a vacation, turn off and unplug everything you can.

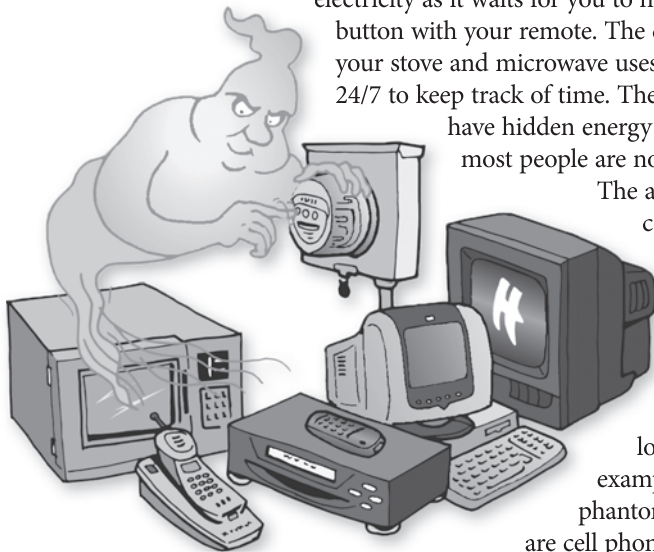
- Replace your incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs). CFLs use less energy and last up to 10 times longer than regular bulbs.

- Dust light bulbs. Dust absorbs light; a clean bulb produces more light than a dirty one.

- During the winter, remove window air conditioners and seal the windows with caulk and weather-stripping.

- Install gaskets behind outlets and switch plates located on the inside of exterior walls.

- If drafts sneak in under exterior doors, replace the threshold and install weather-stripping.



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Replace incandescent bulbs with CFLs.



Left, a deciduous tree on the south side of a house will cool the home in summer and allow sunlight through in winter. Right, upgrading your insulation R-values will reduce the amount of energy needed to run home heating and cooling systems.

- Add fireproof caulk where the chimney meets the wall, inside and outside.
- When the fireplace is not in use, make sure fireplace dampers are sealed tight. Keep fireplace glass doors closed.
- Install a water-saving showerhead. Don't worry, it will not reduce your water pressure.
- Use aerators on kitchen and bathroom sink faucets.
- Fix leaky faucets, especially if it is a hot water faucet. One drop per second can add up to 165 gallons a month, which is more than one person uses in two weeks.
- Use smaller kitchen appliances whenever possible. Heating food in the microwave uses only 20 percent of the energy required by a full-sized oven.
- Vacuum the refrigerator coils about twice a year to keep the compressor running efficiently.
- Don't leave the refrigerator door open. Keep the refrigerator at about 36 to 38 degrees and the freezer at zero to 5 degrees.
- Check the seal on your refrigerator door by



Install water-saving showerheads.

closing it on a dollar bill. If you can easily pull the bill out, it is time to replace the gaskets.

- Don't leave the oven door open. Opening the door repeatedly while cooking drops the oven temperature as much as 100 degrees, requiring additional energy to bring the temperature back up.
- Use lids on pots and pans to reduce cooking times. Don't put a small pan on a large burner.
- Run the dishwasher with only full loads and use the air-dry cycle.
- Look for the Energy Star logo when you buy appliances or electronics.
- Put your computer to sleep or turn it off when not in use.
- A laptop computer can save 80 percent to 90 percent in electrical costs compared with a desktop system
- Unplug any electrical device that is not being used and turn off lights when you leave a room.
- Upgrade your insulation R-values: attic to R-38; floors and walls to whatever fills the joists. This will keep your heating and cooling dollars inside the home and reduce the need for air conditioners, heat pumps or resistance heat to work overtime. ■

For more tips and a list of rebates offered for homes that heat with electricity, call Klickitat PUD's Energy Services at (509) 773-7622 or toll free at (800) 548-8357 ext. 622.