

# Energy Saving Tips

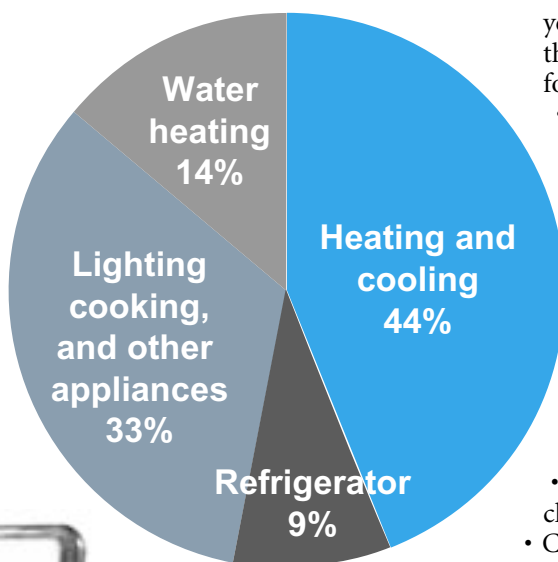
Energy savings start with an energy reduction plan. Considering the average family spends \$1,300 a year on energy bills, finding ways to cut energy is important. Tips for energy conservation include:

## Lighting

- Turn off non-essential lights and appliances.
- Install dimer switches on lights.
- Use outdoor lights with photocell units or timers to go off during the day.
- Replace lights in high-use areas with florescent. By replacing 25 percent of your lights; you can save about 50% of your lighting energy.
- Use task lighting instead of brightly lighting an entire room

## Heating and Cooling

- Check the insulation in the attic, ceiling, exterior and basement walls, floors and crawl spaces to see if it meets the levels recommended for your area. Suggested R-values include: ceilings below ventilated attics, R-49; cathedral ceiling, R-38 to R-60; walls, R-18 to R-28; floors over unheated crawlspaces, R-25; crawl spaces if dry, ventilation blocked and floor not insulated, R-19; slab edge, R-8, basement interior walls, R-11 to R-19 and basement exterior walls, R-10 to R-15.
- Double-paned windows and proper



How we use energy in our homes (based on national averages)

insulation will reduce your heating and cooling costs.

- Insulate ducts—many are so leaky; more than 35 percent of the conditioned air is lost before it arrives at the target room the duct is trying to reach, wasting more than 20 percent of the energy used to condition the air.
- In the summertime, close window coverings during the day to hold out heat.
- Open window coverings in the winter to let in solar heat.
- Close shades and blinds at night.
- Caulk and weatherstrip windows and doors that leak air.
- Install programmable thermostats—you can save as much as 10 percent a



year on heating and cooling by turning the thermostat back 10 to 15 percent for eight hours.

- In the winter, turn your thermostats down to 68 degrees or below.
- During the heating season, close unoccupied rooms.
- Whole house fans help cool the home by pulling cool air and exhausting warm air through the attic.
- Watch placement of lamps or TV sets near air-conditioning thermostats.
- Keep fireplace dampers closed unless a fire is going.
- Clean and replace furnace filters once a month or as needed.
- Plant trees or shrubs to shade air-conditional units.

- Keep windows on the south side of your house clean to maximize solar gain.
- Use windbreaks to deflect winter winds from your house.

## Appliances

- Purchase energy saving appliances.
- Wash full loads of dishes in the dishwasher but don't overload.
- Letting your dishes air dry or using energy save dry—adds up to significant saving.
- Clean the condenser coils



- on your refrigerator once a year.
- Use electric pans or toaster ovens for small meals rather than heating the large stove or oven.
- When doing laundry—adjust water levels in washing machines. Switch water temperature from hot to warm to cut the energy use in half. When washing clothes 80-85 percent of energy used is heating the water.
- Install low-flow faucets and showerheads.
- Lower the thermostat on your water heater—115 degrees Fahrenheit provides comfortable hot water for most uses.
- Build Energy Star Homes which include tighter construction, tight ducts, improved insulation, high performance windows and energy efficient heating and cooling systems.



## Who To Contact For More Information

### CITY OF LINCOLN

- Recycling Operations (recycling hotline) – 441-8215
  - Solid Waste Operations (landfill disposal information) 441-8102
  - Wastewater Operations (wastewater or sewer assistance) 441-7961
  - Water Production & Distribution (water distribution, quality or conservation steps) – 441-7571
  - Watershed Management (storm drain, erosion control or mud in street) 441-4959
  - Parks and Recreation Department (parks and green space) – 441-7847
- <http://lincoln.ne.gov>

### LINCOLN-LANCASTER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

- Hazardous Waste (assistance for households and businesses) 441-8021
  - Air Quality – 441-8040
  - Keep Lincoln and Lancaster County Beautiful – 441-8035
- <http://lincoln.ne.gov>

### WASTECAP OF NEBRASKA

- (Business recycling assistance) 436-2383
- <http://wastecapne.org>

### UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN EXTENSION IN LANCASTER COUNTY

- (Information on recycling, yard waste alternatives, agricultural pesticide container recycling, and more.) 441-7180
- <http://lancaster.unl.edu>

## Reduce Hazardous Waste For Home

The best way to protect your home from toxic materials is to keep them out of the home. To keep these materials out of the home, buy less hazardous materials.

When deciding which products to buy, read the labels on the products. If the product label says the product can be cleaned up with water, the product probably is not toxic or hazardous. A good example of this type of product is latex paint. The paint can label will say you can clean brushes and your hands with soap and water. Latex paint is less hazardous and less toxic.

### Hazardous Products

Products are considered hazardous if they are:

- **Flammable or Combustible:** They can easily ignite.
- **Explosive or Reactive:** They can detonate or explode through exposure to heat, sudden shock or pressure.
- **Corrosive:** They can cause a chemical reaction that can burn or destroy living tissue or other materials.
- **Toxic:** They are capable of causing injury or death through ingestion, inhalation or skin absorption.

### Read the Label

Labels of hazardous products are required by law to include certain warnings. Hazardous product labels often list the principal hazards such as “flammable,” “causes burns to skin and eyes,” or “vapor harmful.” Key words to look for are called “Signal Words.” Signal words indicate the level of toxicity of the

product. Purchase the products with the safest or lowest level of hazard.

- **No Word:** if the labels contain no signal word or special warnings, or if it explains you can use water or soap in clean up, the product is safe to use.
- **Caution:** the product is slightly toxic. This product with this signal word on the label is not as safe as the first product but is safer to use than products with any other signal word on the label.
- **Warning:** the product is moderately toxic. This product is more hazardous than one with “caution” on the label.
- **Danger:** The product is highly toxic, corrosive or extremely flammable.
- **Poison:** The product is highly toxic.

### Minimize Your Risk

Make sure the product you want to buy poses the lowest level of risk by reading and understanding the label. Purchase the product with the lowest

level signal word. If the label does not contain words like “Flammable,” “Corrosive,” “Explosive,” “Reactive,” “Poison” “Toxic,” or “Hazardous,” the product may be safe to use.

The words “natural” or “organic” do not indicate a safe product. A product labeled “all natural ingredients” can still contain hazardous materials. If you feel uncomfortable with the ingredients or the instructions for use, do not purchase the product.

Accidental ingestion of certain products or breathing fumes can cause injury or death. Keep away from small children and pets. If you can't keep children or pets away from it, do not buy it. Many labels will specifically say to keep out of the reach of children. Many lawn products warn to keep children and pets off the lawn for a period of time after applying product.

## Businesses Toxics Reduction

The best way for businesses to avoid the health risks and costs of hazardous materials is to reduce or eliminate the materials.

The first step is to reduce the amount of hazardous materials businesses own or use. Some people will read the directions on a product and use twice as much as is recommended. They believe more is better or will work faster. The amount not needed to do the job is waste. A smart choice is to buy material just before it is needed. Don't buy large quantities and store them on site, doing so invites dangerous accidents. Buying what is needed when it is needed, reduces the risk of accidents.

The second step is to reduce the hazard. Buy materials least hazardous or toxic possible to do the job. Many manufacturers now make citrus-based or water-based solvents. Buy latex and water-based paints. Avoid products that have the words “warning,” “danger” or “poison” on the label. If a product requires users to have special training or protective equipment, that is a potentially hazardous product.

Solvent substitution information is available on several Web sites:

- Enviro\$en\$e at <http://es.epa.gov>
- The Solvent Alternative Guide (SAGE) at <http://clean.rti.org>
- The Western Regional Pollution Prevention Network (WRPPN) at <http://www.wrppn.org/irta>

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