



The importance of getting building occupants to help save energy cannot be underestimated.

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Building Occupant Energy Efficiency Ideas

The importance of getting building occupants to help save energy cannot be underestimated. That means everyone working in office buildings, such as accountants, secretaries, engineers, and other positions. Their practices and activities can make or break energy efficiency efforts. Here is a sampling of suggestions for reducing energy use that building occupants can do.

Lighting

- Avoid using incandescent task lights (desk lamps). Ask your building manager for a compact fluorescent lamp to replace the incandescent lamp in your task light. Also replace halogen torchiere floor lamps with compact fluorescent models.
- Compact fluorescent lamps use one-fourth as much energy and last ten times longer.
- Turn off lights when out of your office or cubicle. Also turn off lights in unused common areas such as copy rooms, break rooms, conference rooms, and restrooms. The effect on lamp life and energy use when turning the lamp back on is negligible.
- Turn off all lights at night, including task and office lights.
- Turn off lights near windows when daylighting is adequate.
- Many areas are lit more than necessary for their present use. Only use lights that are necessary for tasks being performed.

Heating and Cooling

- Sitting close to a window during the cloudy winter can make you feel cold. If so, close blinds or shades or move further from the window.
- In the winter, close blinds at the end of the day to cut down on heat loss. In the summer, close blinds during the day to avoid the heat gain of direct sunlight.
- Some large spaces may be operated cooler if you provide a spot radiant electric heater focused on the occupant. Turn the heater off when away from your workstation.
- In cold weather, dress warmly and in layers that can be adjusted for optimal comfort.
- Close doors and windows. When the weather is either hot or cold, air from outside can have a big impact on energy bills. Keep doors and windows shut when heating or cooling is needed.

Equipment

- Turn off your computer monitor when you are away from your desk for more than 15 minutes, and certainly at the end of the day. Monitors account for two-thirds of the energy used by computers. Most monitors – all Energy Star monitors – come with power management features that, once set, will automatically turn off the monitor screen when it is not in use for a given period of time. Note that screen savers do not save energy; complex screen savers actually increase energy use.
- Eliminate unnecessary hot plates, coffeepots, and other small appliances in your area and turn off all tools, office machines, and portable appliances when not in use. If you are the last one leaving at the end of the day, turn off the photocopiers and other office equipment.
- Ask your managers about assigning a particular individual in each work area to be responsible for making sure shared equipment, such as copiers and printers, are shut off at the end of each day.
- Less frequently used equipment with remote controls such as televisions and VCRs should be unplugged when not in use because they still use some power even when turned off.

Recycling

- Substitute reusable products for disposable products, whenever possible. For instance, bring your own utensils, plates and cups for eating at work. Cloth hand towels eliminate the need for paper towels. If you must use disposable products, make sure that they contain post-consumer recycled content.
- Reuse items such as paper clips, rubber bands, and paper with print on only one side.
- Share copies of magazines and other publications with other employees when possible.
- Recycle all waste office paper, aluminum cans and plastic bottles in containers provided for that purpose.

Contacts for state facilities:

Washington, Dept. of General Administration
(360) 902-7194

www.ga.wa.gov/

Oregon, Dept. of Administrative Services
(503) 378-2865

www.facilities.das.state.or.us/

Idaho, Dept. of Water Resources, Energy Division
(800) 334-7283

www.idwr.state.id.us/energy/default.htm

Montana, Dept. of Environmental Quality
(406) 444-6750

www.deq.state.mt.us/energy/index.asp

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