



Energy Actions to Save \$ and Increase Comfort for Renters

Energy conservation means lower utility bills and increased comfort.

All residents pay for utilities. Many property managers are currently raising rents to cover increased utility costs. The following tips will help residents save energy.

As renters remember:

- The energy usage of each unit varies in an apartment complex. Ask about the utility rates for specific units and if possible compare within the complex.
- Before caulking, weather-stripping, or any measure requiring an alteration to your rental unit, ask the property manager's permission or ask the property manager to have it done.

Heating and Cooling

In the winter:

- On sunny days, open blinds, shades, and curtains, especially if the windows face south. At night, close the blinds, shades, and curtains.
- Set thermostats no higher than 72°F when people are home. Save about 3% on your heating bill for every 1° lower the thermostat. For example, if you keep the thermostat at 75°F, lowering it 3° to 72°F, will save about 9% (3 x 3%) 9 cents for every dollar you spend on heating costs by wearing a sweater or warmer clothing.
- Lower the thermostat when sleeping. Lowering the thermostat from 72°F to 65°F at night saves 7 cents of every heating dollar. Consider adding blankets and lowering the thermostat to 60° or 55°.
- Never use the stove for additional heat—it is dangerous. Besides causing a fire hazard, there is danger of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Close radiator valves in the rooms that are too warm. Do not open windows if it gets too hot. The furnace will pump out even more heat until the window is closed or the thermostat is turned down.
- Clean or replace furnace filter(s) as directed by the manager or property manager; do not try to clean and reuse disposable filters.

Contact the property manager immediately if the heating system is not keeping you warm or it is too hot.

In the summer:

- Try to keep the heat out by keeping window shades or blinds down and closed. In the evening and early morning, open windows to let in cooler air.
- Lower air conditioning cost by setting the thermostat at higher temperatures when no one is home.

Windows and Doors

- Use towels to block air coming in under doors to the outdoors or buy an inexpensive door sweep. If air leaks around the door frame, install foam weather stripping with adhesive backing between the door and the frame.

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Water Heaters

- Lower the temperature from 140° F to 120° F (medium setting on a gas heater), will cut water-heating costs by 6 to 10%.
- Notify the building manager immediately about faucets leaks. One dripping faucet can waste up to 48 gallons of water a week and waste energy from hot water. Many property managers consider it a lease violation if they are not notified immediately of leaks.

Appliances

Oven

- Pans that fit a burner reduce heat lost.
- Use the broiler when possible; it does not need to be preheated.
- Use the kitchen exhaust fan when cooking.

Refrigerator

- Refrigerators cost \$5 to \$8 per month to operate (3 to 5 % of total energy use). Keep the refrigerator at 36 to 38 ° F and the freezer at 0 to 5 ° F.
- Check the gasket (soft plastic piece that seals the door to the body of the refrigerator); the door should close firmly against the gasket. A dollar bill stay between the gasket and the door. You should feel a slight drag when you pull it out.
- Let food cool before putting in the refrigerator.

Dishwasher

- Run the dishwasher only when it's full. Use energy-saving settings when available.

Washer and dryer

- Only use hot water for very dirty clothes and diapers. Washing in hot water costs 20 to 40 cents per load. When clothes are not heavily soiled wash in cold water using cold water detergents. Full loads of laundry in the washer save both energy and water. Adjust water levels for small loads.
- Clean the lint from the dryer's filter after every load.
- Don't overload the dryer; overloaded dryers take longer to dry clothes.

Air conditioners

- Buy the correct size air conditioner. Air conditioners are rated by the amount of square footage they can efficiently. If the air conditioner is too large, it won't operate efficiently, will use more energy.
- Remove and clean the filter every month
- If possible, put the air conditioner in a window that faces north or is shaded. Remove from the window and store the air conditioner during the winter.

Small appliances and electronics

- Unplug or use a surge protector for computers, printers, phone chargers, small appliances, and electronics. Items with clocks or lights can use as much as 20 percent of your electric bill. Unplugging or turning off with a surge protector is a quick and easy way to save money.

Lighting costs

- Use screw-in compact fluorescent bulbs. Turn off lights when rooms are not occupied

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Furniture and bookcases

- Place bookcases, armoires, or large textile items on outside walls. Check behind the items occasionally for condensation, mildew, or mold.
- Do not to place furniture and curtains over or around registers.

Ask your property manager about:

- Installing programmable thermostats.
- Installing awnings, window shades, or window films to block the summer sun.
- Sealing air leaks around your windows and adding storm windows if needed.
- Caulking and weather-stripping windows and doors and sealing along the basement sill plate
- Fixing leaky faucets and toilets to conserve water.
- Using low-flow shower heads.
- Insulating the water heater if needed.

Purchase ENERGY STAR® appliances, computers, electronics, and lighting to maximize energy and save dollars.

References

Energy Actions to Save \$ and Increase Comfort for Renters has been adapted in part from the following online resources available from the United States Department of Energy and ENERGY STAR.

http://www.eren.doe.gov/buildings/home_renters.html

The U.S. Department of Energy has developed a website for tenants that describe low-cost energy efficient options for hot water use, kitchens, refrigerators, dishwashers, washing machines, dryers and window air conditioners. (visited 10/1/08)

<http://www.energystar.gov/>

ENERGY STAR is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy helping which aims to help families and businesses save money and protect the environment through energy efficient products and practices. (visited 10/1/08)

<http://www1.eere.energy.gov/consumer/tips/>

Energy Savers: Tips on Saving Money and Energy at Home is a free online resource available from the U.S. Department of Energy. Energy Savers provides homeowners with tips for saving energy and money at home and on the road. (visited 10/1/08)

http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=small_business.sb_renters

ENERGY STAR provides energy efficiency information specifically for renters and tenants. (visited 10/1/08)

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