

# Consumer Affairs Tip Sheet

## Energy Savings Tips for Renters

While you may already be turning off lights in unoccupied rooms and adjusting your thermostat to reduce energy bills, here are more tips that help protect the environment, reduce energy consumption and can make a big impact with little out-of-pocket costs.

- Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs). They use up to 75% less energy and can last up to 10 times longer than incandescent light bulbs. These bulbs contain mercury and should be properly recycled. Information regarding recycling CFLs is available from the [Fairfax County Solid Waste Management](#) program. Another alternative is LED bulbs.
- Unplug electronics, small appliances or anything that has a light or standby mode when not in use. Items such as computers or cell phone chargers use power called vampire or phantom loads even when turned off. To eliminate vampire or phantom loads, unplug items when not in use. This can save up to 10% of your energy bill.
- Appliances such as refrigerators, washers and dryers account for about 17% of energy consumption. Minimize the amount of time you hold the refrigerator door open and don't open the door repeatedly because cool air escapes.
- When outside conditions are not too hot or cold, take advantage of daylight by letting natural light in through windows. Using natural light reduces the need for artificial light and reduces energy costs.
- Close window coverings such as curtains, shades or blinds [to trap heat in during the winter and block light and heat out during the summer](#). Up to 25% of energy loss goes out the window.
- When a replacement appliance is needed, discuss energy efficient upgrades such as a programmable thermostat or ENERGY STAR-qualified appliances with your landlord. Always get written permission from your landlord if you would like to replace any electrical, plumbing or mechanical fixtures on your own.
- Consider lighting controls such as dimmers or occupancy sensor controls that can automatically turn lights on and off to prevent energy waste. Make sure you have written permission from the landlord before making any changes or altering light fixtures.
- Wash only full loads of dishes and clothes. Consider air drying both dishes and clothing. However, before you hang clothes indoors or outdoors, make sure you are following all rules or regulations outlined in your lease agreement. Also, do things that require hot water, such as washing dishes or taking a shower in early morning or late evening. Using electricity during off-peak hours cost less. Check with your energy provider for ways to manage costs and conserve.
- If you have a ceiling fan, use it to increase cooling efficiency in the summer. Save on heating bills in the winter by circulating warm air down. Also, use portable floor fans to move the air around in the home. This allows you to adjust the thermostat and save energy without giving up comfort.
- If you pay your own utilities, adjust your heating or air-conditioning based on a pre-set schedule. By turning your thermostat back 10°–15° for eight hours, you can save around 10% a year on heating and cooling bills.

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