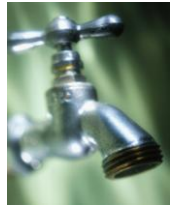




## Simple Ways to Reduce the Cost of your Utilities

*It's hard enough for renters and homeowners to keep up with the rising cost of rent or the cost of maintaining a home, but on top of that they must also factor in utility bills. The cost of utilities is often a large burden, but it does not have to be! Use the following utility cost cutting tips to reduce your utility expenses.*

- ✦ Many utility companies offer free or low cost inspections and free information booklets on home energy savings. Call your local utility company or visit their website for more information.
- ✦ Change the time of day you use your appliances to reduce your energy bill. Contact your energy company to find out their off-peak hours and run your major appliances like dishwashers, ovens, washers and dryers during these off-peak hours whenever it is possible. This will result in saving money on your bill.
- ✦ Contact your local power company to find out if you may be qualified for HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program). HEAP is a federally funded grant program which helps eligible renters and homeowners pay their utility bills (monies do not have to be paid back). Eligibility for HEAP is income based.
- ✦ Conserve water by lowering the temperature of your water heater by 10 degrees (be sure it is not lower than 120 degrees). Also, reduce the water pressure to use less water.
- ✦ If your faucets leak, fix them. Call your landlord or learn to do this yourself by reviewing *Fix It* books in the library. One drop a second wastes approximately 2,700 gallons of water per year!
- ✦ When preparing meals, try to use your microwave rather than the conventional oven, if possible. Microwaves save up to 50% in energy costs as compared to regular ovens.
- ✦ Shut the lights when you leave the room and switch to more energy efficient, fluorescent light bulbs. If you often forget to turn off the lights at night, use a timer and the lights will automatically turn off.
- ✦ If you are in the market for a washing machine, consider buying a front-loading one. They may be more expensive upfront, but they will save you money in the long run. They use 50% less energy and one-third less water and remove more water in the rinse cycle which means less drying time and less electricity.
- ✦ Turn off your computer when you are not using it or use the energy saving *sleep-mode*.
- ✦ Fix drafty windows. Drafty windows can account for up to 15% of your heating and cooling costs. If possible, install double paned windows to avoid this.
- ✦ Don't leave the water running while brushing your teeth, shaving or washing dishes.
- ✦ Unplug any electronic devices that are not use (i.e. hairdryer, toaster, video game consoles and power strips). Even if you are not using the item, if it is plugged into an outlet it is still using electricity, costing you money!
- ✦ Invest in an inexpensive motion activated security light for outside of your residence. This will reduce your energy cost because the light will not be on at all times.
- ✦ Adjust the thermostat at night; consider an electric blanket in the winter, an attic fan in the summer, etc.
- ✦ If no one is home during the day, consider purchasing a programmable thermostat. Set it to turn on a half hour before anyone comes home and save energy and money by not using extra energy all day.
- ✦ Consolidate to one telephone. If you use your cellular phone for most calls, consider cancelling your home phone. If you only use your cell phone for emergencies, consider a low cost prepaid cell phone.
- ✦ Did you know you can dial information for free using services like 1-800-FREE411?



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