

Energy Efficiency



What does it mean to be energy efficient?

Minnesota residents use energy in all parts of their lives: the electricity to power their household, natural gas to heat it, and fuel for transportation. Even the products we buy required energy to create. Energy efficiency is the act of reducing the amount of energy you use through your actions and purchasing decisions.

What is the benefit of energy efficiency in your home?

Saving energy in your household can save hundreds of dollars a year, and also improve comfort in your home. In addition, saving energy reduces your carbon footprint—the amount of carbon dioxide pollution that your household produces annually.

Did you know that half of Minnesota's carbon dioxide pollution comes from residents?

A Minnesota household's electricity, natural gas and transportation use add up to 51,900 pounds of CO₂ and over \$6,200.00 a year.

How can I reduce my energy use?

There are countless simple and easy ways to reduce the amount of energy consumed by your household. Done right, energy efficiency and conservation improves the comfort of your home, improves your indoor air quality and saves money.

Consistently turn off lights and electronics when you leave the room—Televisions, radios, computers and other electronics all add up in their energy usage. In addition, unplug electronics and appliances that are not heavily used.

Be conscious of your home's climate control—consider the following actions:

- Set your furnace thermostat down 2 degrees and your air conditioner up 2 degrees.
- When using a room air conditioner, close the windows and doors to the room to maximize the cooling where it is needed.
- Turn off the air conditioner and use window fans when it is cool at night to move cool air into the house, and close the windows in the morning to keep the cool air in.

Recycle whenever possible—reprocessing materials requires less energy than processing those materials from raw natural resources. For example, the amount of energy saved by recycling one aluminum can is enough to power a television for 3 hours.

In 2007, the Minnesota legislature passed the Next Generation Energy Act, committing the state to reduce our total CO₂ emissions by 80% by 2050.

Energy Efficiency in Action

Energy-Saving Labels

Look for products with these labels when considering purchasing new appliances or electronics. They are guaranteed to consume less energy and ultimately save you money.



Energy Star. ENERGY STAR is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy helping consumers save money and protect the environment through energy efficient products and practices. Products in more than 60 categories are eligible for the ENERGY STAR qualification:

- Qualified refrigerators are at least 15% more efficient than the minimum federal efficiency standard.
- Qualified televisions consume 3 watts or less when switched off, compared to a standard TV, which consumes almost 6 watts on average.
- Qualified furnaces offer a rating of 90% AFUE (Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency), which is 15% more efficient than the minimum federal efficiency standard.

Americans, with the help of ENERGY STAR, saved enough energy in 2008 to avoid greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those from 29 million cars — all while saving \$19 billion on their utility bills.



EPEAT, which stands for Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool, provides a way for consumers to select and compare computer desktops, laptops and monitors based on their environmental attributes, including:

- ENERGY STAR certification,
- Content of post-consumer recycled materials in product and packaging,
- Availability of accessories for powering the product that use renewable energy.

More than 30 manufacturers, including Apple, Hewlett-Packard, Dell, Lenovo and Toshiba currently have products that meet Gold, Silver or Bronze level standards. Visit www.epeat.net for more information.



EPA WaterSense. It takes a considerable amount of energy to deliver and treat the water you use everyday. American public water supply and treatment facilities consume about 56 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) per year. If 1 percent of homes replaced their older toilets with WaterSense models, we would save enough to supply more than 43,000 households electricity for one month. Look for this label when buying your next bathroom sink faucet, showerhead, or toilet to save water, energy and money.

Challenge Yourself to do More

Pledge to reduce—visit the Minnesota Energy Challenge website at www.MNEnergyChallenge.org to join over 22,000 Minnesota households in reducing their annual energy usage through simple, effective actions.

Dakota Valley Recycling

Website: www.DakotaValleyRecycling.org

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