

Home Energy Efficiency

According to NEED, the National Energy Education Development Project, the United States uses a lot of energy—over two million dollars’ worth each minute, 24 hours a day, every day of the year. With less than five percent of the world’s population, we consume about 18.5 percent of its energy.

Energy is more than numbers on a utility bill; it is the foundation of everything we do. All of us use energy every day—for transportation, cooking, heating and cooling rooms, manufacturing, lighting, and entertainment. As consumers, our energy choices and actions can result in reductions in the amount of energy used in each sector of the economy.



Energy efficiency is the use of technology that requires less energy to perform the same function. For instance, switching to LED lightbulbs or buying an Energy Star Appliance. The solutions can be easy and this arcade shows families how to make those changes.

EmPOWER Maryland

Under the “EmPOWER Maryland” initiative, the State will reduce energy consumption by 15 percent by 2015. To help achieve this goal, the Maryland Department of the Environment, Maryland Energy Administration, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, the Public Service Commission and all five utilities, BGE, Delmarva Power, Pepco, Potomac Edison, SMECO are working together to provide Marylanders with programs that can help lower utility bills and keep money in their pockets. <http://climatechange.maryland.gov/empower-maryland/>

What Can You Do?

There are five key areas that are the most important to reduce energy use in your home or apartment. If you want to see a more comprehensive list, <http://mde.maryland.gov/marylandgreen/Pages/Energy.aspx>

1. **Appliances** - Refrigerators, washing machines, dishwashers, air conditioners and water heaters account for a big chunk of your monthly utility bill and the older they are, the more you pay.

[ENERGY STAR®](#) products are independently certified to save energy without sacrificing features or functionality.

2. **HVAC Usage** - A wide variety of pollutants can come into your home through windows, doors, and leaks, including: carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, tobacco smoke, molds and bacteria, cleaning products, pesticides, and vehicle exhaust.

More than 50% of our home energy goes to heating and cooling. Changing your air filter every 3 months will prevent dust and dirt from building up in the system and can help to reduce high energy bills, improve comfort, and help to protect the environment.

3. **Lighting** - Lighting accounts for almost 15% of your total household energy use. Switching to https://www.energystar.gov/products/lighting_fans/light_bulbs/learn_about_led_bulbs LEDs means you use less energy to light your home. Less energy used means less carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere through the burning of fossil fuels. Less energy also means more money in your pocket.
4. **Water Usage** - The average Maryland family of four uses 400 gallons of water per day and spends \$1,100 per year

in water costs. By replacing just [one shower-head](#) with an ENERGY STAR® one you can save the amount of water that it takes to wash 70 loads of laundry and conserve enough energy to power your home for 13 days every year.

5. **Weatherization** - Air leaks can occur all over your home, so inspect around these areas for any cracks and gaps that could cause air leaks. Doors and window frames, air conditioners, baseboards, electrical outlets, switch plates, cable TV and phone lines, and vents and fans are a few areas to check.

Homes and businesses account for almost 39% of total U.S. energy consumption and 38% of U.S. CO2 emissions. Sign up for a [Quick Home Energy Check Up](#) or a [Home Energy Audit](#) with your utility company to help seal leaks in your home.