

# Outsmart Energy Waste and Lower Your Electric Bill



**We don't always think about the electricity we use. But there are many easy ways to cut down on wasted energy. The simple steps outlined here can go a long way to lowering your electric bill, and making your home more comfortable.**



# Outsmart Energy Waste a



## WHERE TO START

- **Make sure the “shell” of your home is tight. Check doors and windows for air leaks, examine caulking and ensure adequate insulation.**
- **Adopt habits like the ones here that will help you waste less energy and lower your electric bill. Start with heating, cooling and hot water use because changes in these areas often make the biggest difference.**

## Heating

- Lower the temperature in your home. Set the thermostat as low as it's comfortable. Try for 68 degrees or lower during the cold months.
- If you heat with a furnace or heat pump, turn the thermostat down at night or when you aren't home. Consider a programmable thermostat to make the changes automatic.
- Clean or change furnace and air conditioning filters regularly. *Monthly is recommended.*
- Close your curtains at night to keep heat inside and open them during the day to allow sun to help warm your home.
- If you have a fireplace, keep the damper closed when it's not being used.
- During winter, keep windows and exterior doors closed to keep heat inside. In the summer, open windows only when it's cooler outside than the temperature inside your home.
- Keep your warm air outlets and heaters clean. Arrange furniture and window coverings so they don't block airflow from registers or heaters.
- Seal seams and openings from the inside to outside of your home with caulk, weather-stripping or spray insulation to prevent air from leaking in or out.

## Lighting

- Replace traditional incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent or LED bulbs. Compare lumens to make sure the lower wattage bulbs will provide the same amount of light.
- Use timers or sensors on security lights so they shine only when needed.
- Turn off lights in rooms not in use or when natural light is enough.
- Dust your light bulbs and fixture covers to get the most light out of your lamps and fixtures.
- Paint or decorate in light colors to reflect more light in the room.
- Add dimmer switches and use the bulb's full brightness only when needed.

## Water Heating and Washing

- Set your water heater thermostat between 120 and 130 degrees.
- Wash only full loads in your clothes washer and dishwasher.
- Use the lowest practical level of water for anything less than a full load.
- Try a cold water detergent and wash clothes in cold water. *Always use a cold water rinse.*
- On your dishwasher, use the “air dry” setting and other power-saving features.
- Consider EnergyStar® models when replacing appliances. They use less water and energy and will lower your electric bill for the life of the appliance.
- Fix leaking or dripping faucets.
- Install water-saving showerheads that use 2.5 gallons per minute or less.
- When away from home for three days or more, turn off the circuit breaker to your electric water heater (*except in freezing weather*).
- Insulate all pipes in unheated areas with foam pipe wraps. Don't forget to wrap the hot water pipe leaving your water heater.

**Remember!** If you're not using it, turn it off and unplug. Many electronics continue to use energy as long as they're plugged in. And appliances in standby mode use energy too. Try a smart strip to cut off power at the source when not in use, and red



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## Cooking

- Use your microwave instead of your range oven to warm food. Smaller appliances like toaster ovens and crock-pots use less energy, too.
- Choose flat-bottom pans to maximize contact with stove burners and use tight-fitting lids to keep steam in the pan.
- When heating water, use only as much as you need to cut down on cooking time.
- Try to match the pan size to the burner size. Using too small a pan on a large burner can waste energy.
- Cook more than one item at a time when you use your oven.
- Use a timer to limit the number of times you open the oven door during baking.
- With glass or ceramic cookware, decrease the oven temperature by 25 degrees.
- Don't use your oven to heat the room.

## Refrigerating and Freezing

- Keep your refrigerator at 37 to 40 degrees and your freezer at 0-5 degrees.
- Freezers are more efficient when kept full – milk jugs filled part way with water can be used to fill space.
- Defrost your freezer when ice or frost gets one-quarter inch thick or more.
- Vacuum or dust your freezer/refrigerator coils at least every six months. *Coils are on the back of or underneath the appliance.*
- Check your refrigerator and freezer door gaskets periodically for signs of deterioration and replace them when necessary.
- Know what you're looking for before opening the refrigerator or freezer door and mark items for quick identification.
- When purchasing new major appliances, compare energy costs and consider EnergyStar® models.

## Clothes Dryers

- Plan laundry with drying in mind and separate lightweight items, which take less time to dry, from heavy ones.
- Don't overdry clothes and line dry whenever possible.
- Keep the dryer vent and lint filter clean.
- Check to make sure the moist air is exiting your home.

## Preventing Air Leaks

*Air leaks waste energy and make your home less comfortable. Checking for air leaks in your home can help keep your electric bills down year round.*

- Replace broken or cracked windows.
- Seal gaps around windows and doors.
- Adjust weather-stripping so it fits snugly.
- Add insulation, caulking, foam or other sealing materials to block air flow.
- Check attic and crawl space hatches.
- Install glass doors on fireplaces and close the damper when not in use (*48 hours after the last fire*).
- Check the "R" value of your insulation and add more if needed. Attic or ceiling insulation should be at least R-38 and floor insulation should be between R-19 and R-30.



like chargers (phone, laptop, etc.) and standby mode use electricity as well. Wasted energy!



## KNOWLEDGE IS POWER!

**Read your electric meter before you leave for vacation and again when you return home. Then you'll know how much energy your home uses when it's empty. To read your meter, write down the number on each dial. If the pointer is between numbers, record the smaller number.**

**For questions about how to cut energy waste:**

**Call an energy counselor at 360-992-3355**

**Email [ecod@clarkpud.com](mailto:ecod@clarkpud.com)**

**Visit our 100 Columbia Way location in Vancouver**

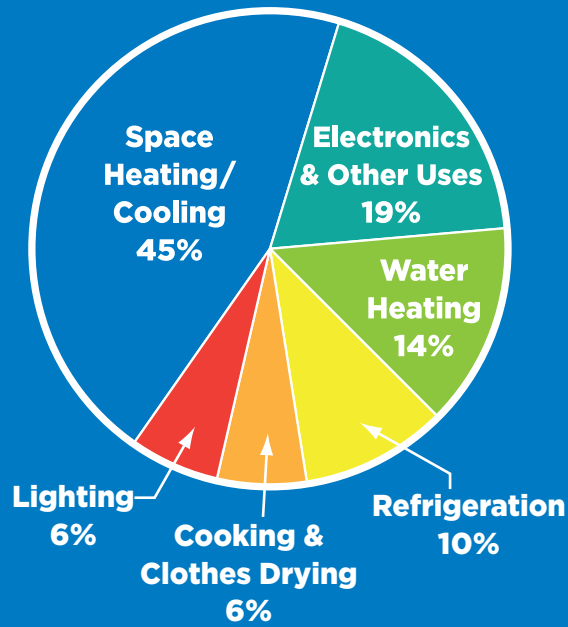
## Bon Voyage! Tips to cut waste when you're away

*Before an extended getaway, make sure your home is ready. Making a few changes before you leave can keep energy costs down and also make your home more safe.*

- Turn gas water heater down or turn off electric water heater at the breaker.
- In the winter, set your thermostat at 50-55 degrees (*but no lower*). It'll be chilly when you get home but not so cold that pipes will freeze.
- Unplug portable heaters as well as your clothes washer and dryer. Insulate pipes to keep them from freezing.
- Protect the food in your freezer by asking a neighbor to check on it periodically, especially if there's an outage, to make sure it's back on and working properly.
- Unplug all appliances, including the toaster, coffee pot, iron and microwave oven.
- Unplug electronics like TVs, DVD players and computers. Many of these devices continue to draw power even when off. If left on, it's a good idea to use a surge protector.
- Unplug your waterbed heater or lower the temperature to 70 degrees. Just don't forget to start it warming back up once you get home.
- Block vents on the windy side of your house or where pipes are exposed. Leave vents open on the other sides of the house for ventilation.
- Timers can be used to turn lights and other small items on and off when you're not home as a deterrent to potential burglars.
- Turn off all the lights except those attached to a timer.
- Let Clark Public Utilities and other service providers know if you'll be gone for an extended period of time to make arrangements for bills you may not be home to receive.
- Put a hold on mail and newspaper deliveries.



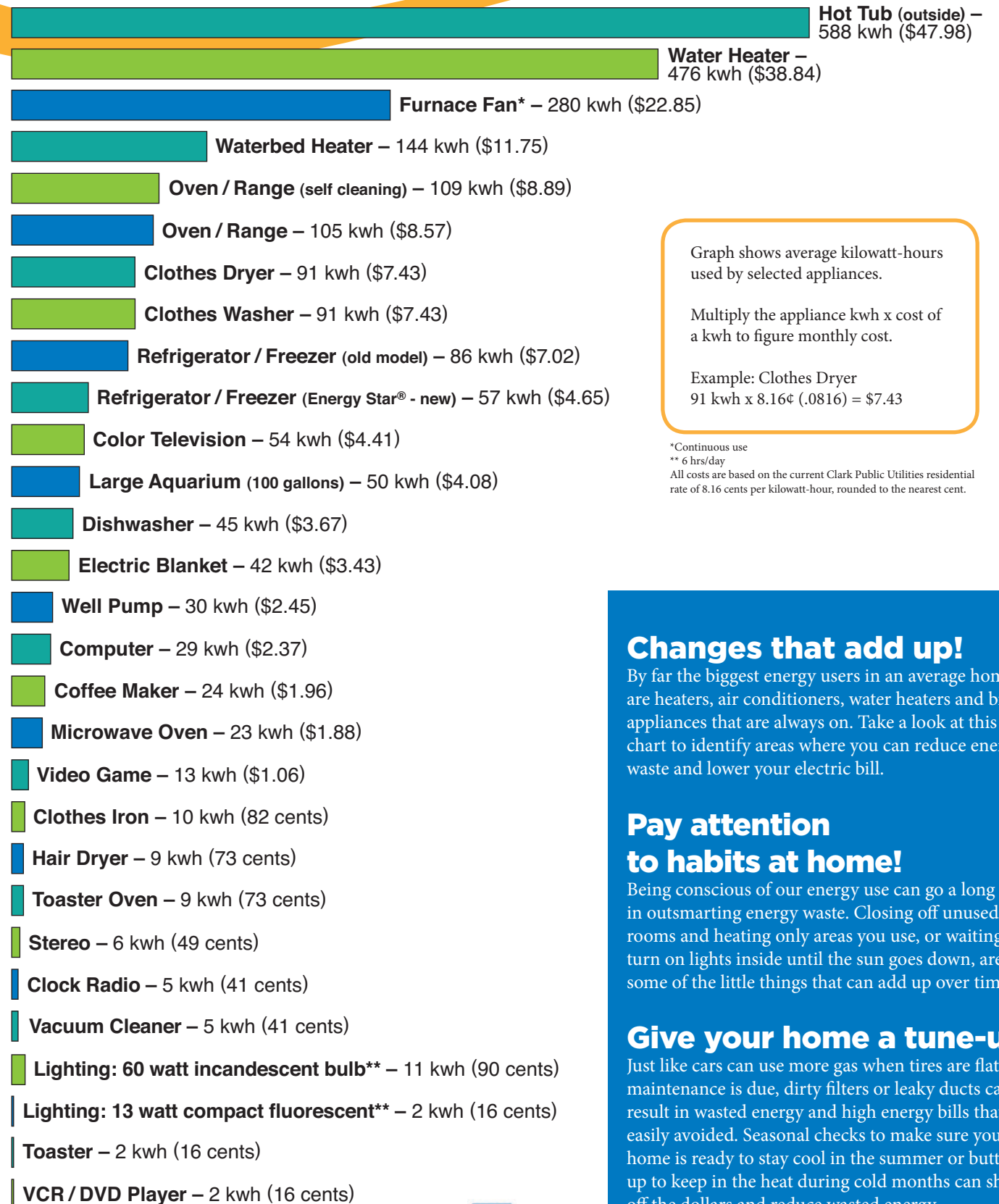
## HOW WE USE ENERGY IN OUR HOME



## LOOK OUT FOR THESE ENERGY EATERS!

There are a handful of appliances and devices that are particularly power-hungry. Think twice about equipment including:

- Space heater
- Waterbed with heater
- Hot tub
- Fish tank or aquarium
- Halogen lamps
- Old, extra refrigerators and freezers
- Home office equipment
- Pumps for well, pool, ponds/waterfalls and septic systems



Graph shows average kilowatt-hours used by selected appliances.

Multiply the appliance kwh x cost of a kwh to figure monthly cost.

Example: Clothes Dryer  
91 kwh x 8.16¢ (.0816) = \$7.43

\*Continuous use

\*\* 6 hrs/day

All costs are based on the current Clark Public Utilities residential rate of 8.16 cents per kilowatt-hour, rounded to the nearest cent.

## Changes that add up!

By far the biggest energy users in an average home are heaters, air conditioners, water heaters and big appliances that are always on. Take a look at this chart to identify areas where you can reduce energy waste and lower your electric bill.

## Pay attention to habits at home!

Being conscious of our energy use can go a long way in outsmarting energy waste. Closing off unused rooms and heating only areas you use, or waiting to turn on lights inside until the sun goes down, are just some of the little things that can add up over time.

## Give your home a tune-up!

Just like cars can use more gas when tires are flat or maintenance is due, dirty filters or leaky ducts can result in wasted energy and high energy bills that are easily avoided. Seasonal checks to make sure your home is ready to stay cool in the summer or buttoned up to keep in the heat during cold months can shave off the dollars and reduce wasted energy.

