

Rochester



Concerned Taxpayers

This is a list of energy and water saving tips compiled by members of the RCTA. If you have any ideas that you would like to have added, please e-mail them.

Energy saving tips:

1. Don't Wait to Insulate

Upgrading your insulation to a higher R-value can lower energy costs dramatically. Start with insulating the attic and unheated crawl spaces. Sealing ducts, caulking, and weather stripping reduce energy loss even more. Examine and adjust, if necessary, weather stripping, door sweeps, and thresholds. Save up to 30% by adding insulation and weather stripping, and sealing gaps around windows and doors, chimneys, furnace and gas water heater flues, water pipes, dryer and bathroom vents, etc. Install foam gaskets behind electric-outlet and switch-plate covers.

2. Keep Your Cool

Ceiling fans can make you feel cooler while reducing air conditioning costs by as much as 40% in the summer. In the winter, they can save up to 10% in heating costs by circulating warm air from the ceiling to the floor where you can enjoy it. Learn more about reducing your energy bills.

3. Turn lights off

Shut off lights, computers and other electronic appliances when you are not using them. Many computer monitors have a sleep mode setting which when activated greatly reduces energy consumption.

4. Thermostat setting

During the heating season, save up to 20% by lowering your thermostat 10 degrees during the day if no one is home and 5 degrees at night. Open south-facing window coverings (e.g. drapes, blinds, etc.) during the day. Close all window coverings at night to keep the heat in.

Lower the temperature on your *electric* water heater to 120 (F) degrees. Turn it off when leaving for extended periods of time. Electric water heaters can be set on timers; gas heaters must be set manually.

5. Refrigerator settings

Set refrigerator temperatures between 37 and 40 degrees (F). Clean the coils. Keep the refrigerator stocked as it takes more energy to cool an empty refrigerator.

6. Wash full loads of dishes and air dry

When washing clothes, use warm or cold water and rinse with cold. Air dry clothes, but not indoors as this creates unwanted mold and moisture problems.

7. Exhaust fans

Always use the bathroom or kitchen exhaust fans if they are vented to the outside while showering or cooking and baking to avoid potential moisture problems.

8. Fireplaces, wood stoves, pellet stoves

Close your fireplace damper and seal the opening shut when not in use. Block off the air intake and exhaust when the stoves are not in use. Routine cleaning of the chimney flue to prevent build up and stove exhausts to ensure proper burning.

9. Microwave versus conventional

A microwave uses half the power of a conventional oven and can often cook items in a quarter of the time. Crock pots also offer savings over conventional ovens.

10. Try Branching Out

For an all-around environmental boost, plant a tree. When properly sited, trees and other landscaping can save up to 30% in home cooling and heating costs. They also help cool your community and make your home even more enjoyable.

11. Something Bugging You?

Stay in control by starting with nature's own methods to beat the bugs. Attract birds with birdhouses, feeders, and natural backyard wildlife habitats to help reduce pests. Bug lights, screening, citronella candles, and insecticidal soaps are other less-toxic alternatives.

12. Clear the Air

Tune up your systems to make your family more comfortable while you save on heating and cooling costs. Upgrading and properly maintaining your home air filters is easy and helps improve indoor air quality. Vented range hoods and room exhaust fans also help remove smoke, moisture, airborne bacteria, and other indoor air pollutants.

13. Make Your Own Mulch

Composting is the smart way to dispose of leaves, yard clippings, selected food scraps, and other organic wastes. Instead of burdening landfills, you'll produce rich nutrients to fertilize your garden the natural way. And it's free. Make it a habit to recycle your glass, cans, cardboard, and newspapers, too.

Water saving tips:

1. Lower the Flow

Your old shower head probably delivers a lot more water than you really need. Reduce that to 2.5 gallons a minute or less with today's standard shower head – it can make a difference in your water bill.

2. Install Low-flow Faucet Aerators

Like your old showerhead, your traditional kitchen and bathroom faucets probably aren't water

efficient. When fully opened, these fixtures probably run at a rate of about 4 gallons per minute. This flow rate can be adjusted to about 2.5 gallons per minute by putting in a low-flow aerator on your faucets. Installation is easy and you'll start saving water right away.

- 3.** When washing dishes by hand, don't let the water run while rinsing. Fill one sink with wash water and the other with rinse water.
- 4.** Adjust sprinklers so only your lawn is watered and not the house, sidewalk, or street.
- 5.** Run your clothes washer and dishwasher only when they are full. You can save up to 1,000 gallons a month.
- 6.** Put a drop of food coloring in your toilet tank. If it seeps into the toilet bowl without flushing, you have a leak. Fixing it can save up to 1,000 gallons a month.
- 7.** Choose shrubs and ground covers instead of turf for hard-to-water areas such as steep slopes and isolated strips.
- 8.** Install covers on pools and spas and check for leaks around your pumps.
- 9.** Use the garbage disposal sparingly. Compost vegetable food waste instead and save gallons every time.
- 10.** Plant in the fall when conditions are cooler and rainfall is more plentiful.
- 11.** For cold drinks keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap. This way, every drop goes down you and not the drain.
- 12.** Monitor your water bill for unusually high use. Your bill and water meter are tools that can help you discover leaks.
- 13.** Water your lawn and garden in the morning or evening when temperatures are cooler to minimize evaporation.
- 14.** Wash your fruits and vegetables in a pan of water instead of running water from the tap.
- 15.** Collect the water you use for rinsing fruits and vegetables, then reuse it to water houseplants.
- 16.** If water runs off your lawn easily, split your watering time into shorter periods to allow for better absorption.
- 17.** Check outdoor faucets, sprinklers and hoses for leaks.
- 18.** Check the root zone of your lawn or garden for moisture before watering using a spade or trowel. If it's still moist two inches under the soil surface, you still have enough water.
- 19.** Adjust your lawn mower to a higher setting. A taller lawn shades roots and holds soil moisture better than if it is closely clipped.
- 20.** Collect water from your roof to water your garden.

- 21.** Install a rain sensor on your irrigation controller so your system won't run when it's raining.
- 22.** Don't use running water to thaw food. Defrost food in the refrigerator for water efficiency and food safety.
- 23.** Soaker hoses and drip irrigation systems can lower your water bills by delivering water directly where you need it. By reducing or eliminating runoff, you also reduce the burden of fertilizers and pesticides on our lakes, streams, and oceans and still have a gorgeous garden or lawn.
- 24.** Soak pots and pans instead of letting the water run while you scrape them clean.
- 25.** Avoid recreational water toys that require a constant flow of water.
- 26.** Turn off the water while brushing your teeth and save 25 gallons a month.
- 27.** Water your plants deeply but less frequently to encourage deep root growth and drought tolerance.
- 28.** Use a grease pencil to mark the water level of your pool at the skimmer. Check the mark 24 hours later to see if you have a leak.
- 29.** Insulate hot water pipes for more immediate hot water at the faucet and for energy savings.
- 30.** Wash your car on the lawn, and you'll water your lawn at the same time.
- 31.** Water only when necessary. More plants die from over-watering than from under-watering.