



Energy Saving Tips: Buildings

A list of commonly recognized energy savings measures for buildings.

Energy savings measures for buildings are provided below. Some are simple and inexpensive to implement, while others are more complicated and expensive. The extent of energy savings realized, the implementation cost, and the implementation approach will vary (sometimes substantially) by consumer, building, geographic location, or scale of implementation. For measures that are more expensive, decisions about implementation should consider how much time it will take to recover the investment.

No-Cost Measures

- Lower the temperature setting on your hot water heater to 120°F.
- Set your central heating and cooling system thermostats to 68°F or lower in the winter and 72°F or higher in the summer.
- Turn off lights and appliances when not in use.
- Actively manage indoor temperatures by opening and closing windows and window coverings (e.g., open windows to take advantage of cool evening breezes, close blinds or curtains against direct sunlight in the summer to reduce heat gain, open blinds or curtains to capture heat gain from sunlight during the winter, close blinds or curtains in the winter to reduce heat loss).
- Ensure heating registers and vents are not blocked by furniture or window coverings.
- Use cold water in your clothes washing machines and run only full loads.
- Use a clothesline.
- Use the "air dry" cycle on your dishwasher and run only full loads.
- Clean refrigerator coils and seals and defrost freezer units. Set the refrigerator temperature to 35°F and the freezer temperature to 0°F.
- Reduce the use of heat-producing appliances (e.g., ovens, ranges, clothes dryers) on hot days.
- Unplug or get rid of spare refrigerators and freezers, particularly if they are not ENERGY STAR appliances.
- Use the stairs instead of an elevator.
- Block off chimneys when not in use.
- Drain sediment from your water heater tank.

Low-Cost Measures

- Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs).
 - Install power strips to shut off the power use of appliances that occurs even when they are switched off.
 - Install ceiling fans and other fans to circulate air in the building.
 - Insulate your water heater and hot water pipes.
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- Replace furnace, air conditioner, and heat pump filters regularly.
 - Install or replace weatherstripping around windows and doors.
 - Install storm windows.
 - Install low-flow showerheads and faucets to reduce use of hot water and repair leaky faucets.
 - Install an ENERGY STAR-rated programmable thermostat.
 - Replace refrigerator and freezer seals as needed to ensure a tight seal.
 - Install dimmers and motion sensors on lights where possible to control electricity use.

Higher-Cost Measures

- Hire a qualified company to conduct an energy audit of your building.
- Weatherize and insulate your building.
- Replace old appliances with ENERGY STAR appliances.
- Replace air conditioner units with evaporative coolers, attic fans, or whole-house fans.
- Replace old heating units and water heaters with high-efficiency systems.
- Install solar tubes to reduce the need for indoor lighting, particularly in interior rooms.
- Install awnings, tinted window film, and green cover (trees, vines) to reduce a building's heat gain.