

Energy Conservation

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Energy Conservation for Apartment Dwellers*

*from NYS Public Service Commission Consumer Guide

Sure.....as a tenant you may not have as much control over your energy use as a homeowner, but there are simple steps that you can take to save energy and reduce your electric bills.

The best news is that most of these conservation measures are low cost or free.

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Tune Up Your Refrigerator

Your refrigerator is probably the largest user of electricity in your apartment. Like a car, if serviced regularly, a well-maintained refrigerator uses less energy. Vacuum the condenser coils annually, defrost whenever ice in the freezer gets 1/4 inch thick, and replace worn door seals. Use a thermometer to ensure that it is operating at the optimum temperature (40° F in the refrigerator section, 0° F in the freezer).

If your refrigerator has a "power-saver" switch, use it according to the manufacturer's instructions. (These refrigerator tune-up tips are equally applicable to freezers.)

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Put a Lid on Cooking Costs

Use your oven efficiently by cooking several dishes at once. Avoid preheating the oven unnecessarily. Don't open the door while food is cooking. Use flat bottom pots with tight fitting lids. Clean the range, and avoid heating small pans on large burners.

Temperature controlled burner elements, pressure cookers and microwave ovens are also energy savers.

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Be Bright About Lighting

Everyone realizes that leaving lights burning in empty rooms is wasteful, but few people think about the cost of over lighting. Use lower wattage bulbs, dimmers, or lamps with three-way switches to match lighting levels to activities.

For the same amount of light, fluorescent bulbs use only one-quarter of the electricity of incandescent bulbs -- and they last much longer. Where possible, replace incandescent bulbs with screw-in fluorescent lamps.

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Cool Down Midsummer Electric Bills

Unnecessary cooling wastes energy and money. On sunny days, close shades or blinds to decrease solar heating. Set your air conditioner's controls to cool your apartment to a comfortable temperature and turn your air conditioner off when you leave your apartment. If you install a low-voltage timer, you can set it to turn the air conditioner back on a half hour before you return, thereby saving money without sacrificing comfort. When outside temperatures drop in the evening, turn off the air conditioner and open a window. Keep the air conditioner's filter and cooling fins clean for efficient operation. Also, try to limit cooking during hot weather, or use an outside vented kitchen exhaust fan.

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Invest In Energy Efficiency

Some tenants do not own the major appliances in their apartments. If you own an appliance and are thinking of replacing it, be sure to learn about the energy efficiency ratings of common models. An energy efficient refrigerator, freezer or air conditioner may use 20% less energy than an inefficient model with the same capacity and features.

Don't buy more appliances than you need. Size is important too -- oversized refrigerators and air conditioners cost more to buy and more to operate. Remember, too, that convenience features like self-cleaning ovens, self-defrosting refrigerators, and instant-on televisions increase energy usage. You can save substantially by selecting appliances wisely. For example, choosing an energy efficient 14 cubic foot refrigerator with manual defrost, rather than an inefficient 18 cubic foot model with automatic defrost, can cut your electricity costs for refrigeration almost in half.

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Button Up For Winter

You may not be able to control the amount of heat in your building, but you can make sure you are getting the most out of it.

of what you get by moving obstructing furniture and draperies away from radiators, b
units, and air registers. Placing an insulated aluminum foil deflector behind each radi
also make your apartment warmer.

Consider installing low-cost caulking, weatherstripping, or interior plastic storm wind
cover or remove air conditioners for the winter.

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One Safety Precaution

Never use your range or oven to warm your apartment. Operating an electric or gas s
space heater can damage the heating elements and could start a fire!

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Finally, A Warm Thought For Your Landlord...

If your apartment building is not comfortable during the winter, an inefficient heating
inadequate insulation, poor weatherstripping, or missing storm windows may be at fa

For typical annual operating costs of major appliances, see our [Appliance Costs](#) page.

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