

Conservation Tips for Apartments

Most apartment dwellers pay for some if not all their own utilities in addition to rent. Particularly during heating and cooling seasons, energy costs can soar! Even if utility bills are included in the monthly rent, monitoring energy costs may prevent rent increases. Improved energy efficiency in your apartment will lower your energy consumption and will be reflected in lower utility bills. Thinking beyond your own budget, it's important to conserve our world's limited energy resources.

25% of our nation's energy is consumed by residential households. With 50% going towards heating and cooling and 20% towards heating of water, the remaining 20% is used for lighting, cooking, refrigeration and other appliances. If we look around there are many ways to conserve energy and save money!

Low-cost and no-cost suggestions:

- During the winter, if you have a thermostat, keep it set between 65 degrees and 68 degrees during the day and set it back even further at night. Don't "fiddle" with a thermostat setting; that wastes energy. If you feel chilly, put on a sweater.
- Keep heat registers, radiators or baseboard heating units free of dust and don't block them with furniture. A heat deflector can be used over the floor registers to direct the heat into the room.
- During the summer, air conditioners consume huge amounts of energy. If you want a cool apartment when you get home from work, connect the unit to a timer and set it to go on a half-hour before your arrival time.
- In the summer, keep your thermostat at the highest temperature comfortable to save money and conserve energy. You can save 3% on cooling your apartment for every degree you raise your thermostat in the summer.
- Fans can make your air conditioners job easier while saving you money. In moderate heat, fans can completely replace air conditioners.
- You can save on cooling costs by avoiding cooling rooms that are not occupied.
- Place a window air conditioner unit in a window of your apartment that is most protected from direct sunlight, but be sure not to block the cooling unit.
- Use bathroom and kitchen ventilation fans only as long as necessary. In just an hour you can lose all the heated (or cooled) air in your apartment through an exhaust fan.
- On overcast winter days and at night, keep shades and draperies closed; open them on sunny days to take advantage of solar heat.
- In the summer, keep windows closed and covered during the hottest hours of the day; open windows, top to bottom, after sunset.
- If possible, open windows opposite one another to get cross ventilation.
- Buy or make "draft protectors" to put at base of doors to cut air infiltration.
- Place large pieces of furniture and bookcases on exterior walls. This adds some buffer from cold walls.
- Practice seasonal accessorizing and decorating. Warm colors and soft textures provide physical and psychological warmth.

- Make sure your refrigerator door closes tightly and keep the condenser coils clean. A door leak allows cool air to escape, forcing your refrigerator to use more energy to keep food cold. Contact your landlord if you suspect your refrigerator is wasting energy.
- Check the temperature settings for the most efficient appliance operations. Refrigerators should be set between 34-37 degrees and freezers should be at 5 degrees. Check your manual for specific recommendations.
- Running your dishwasher or washing machine only when it's full can save water and energy. A half filled dishwasher or washing machine can cost twice as much as running a full load.
- If you wash dishes by hand, don't let water run continuously; fill a pan with hot water for rinsing.
- Wash clothes in cold water to save on the cost of heating water. Except for heavily soiled or all-white loads, there is little benefit to washing in hot water.
- Turn off lights and equipment when not needed.
- Unplug appliances when not in use. Many household devices continue to draw a small amount of power when they are turned off. These "phantom" loads occur in most appliances that use electricity, such as VCRs, televisions, stereos, computers, and kitchen appliances.
- Overheating your water beyond 120 degrees can be wasteful and unsafe. Setting your water heater temperature to 120 degrees or less can save you money.
- Take a short shower instead of a bath and you'll save hundreds of gallons in water. Showers use less water than baths. Every minute you cut from your shower time will save you 3 gallons of water and energy used to heat that water.

The most important thing you can do is get involved and to let the apartment owner know your concerns about conserving energy. Let them know how energy is being wasted in your building.

Are there drafts around windows and doors? With a combination of weather stripping, caulking, storm windows and storm doors you can reduce energy requirements and costs by as much as 10-30%.

Is your building adequately insulated? If not, recommend that insulation be installed in the ceiling and sidewalls. This, too, has a very positive effect on energy conservation.

Are some areas of your building heated unnecessarily? Basements and storage areas are common culprits. Rising energy costs affect building owner and tenants alike.

Are appliances or air conditioners inefficient and in need of replacement? Anoka Municipal Utilities offers several different rebates. Have your landlord contact us before making a purchase to take advantage of these programs.