

# Home/Business Energy Tips

## **First, benchmark your total annual building energy usage as a baseline.**

1. Add up a year's worth of electricity in kilowatt hours (kWh), from utility bills.
2. If you have natural gas, add up a year's worth of gas usage in hundreds of cubic feet (CCF) or therms, from utility bills.



## **Next, conserve energy by using less with the systems you have. For example:**



1. Set the thermostat to the EPA recommended settings of 68 for winter and 78 for summer (or as close as you can get to those!).
2. Run full loads of dishes and clothes. Wash clothes in cold water.
3. Turn off lights and appliances that aren't in use.
4. Unplug chargers and seldom used electronics between uses.
5. Use blinds or curtains to control sunlight, blocking heat gain in the summer and using the passive heat in the winter.

## **Then, consider actions that will improve efficiency.**

1. Start with the building envelope. Weatherize doors and windows with caulk or stripping, add insulation if you find deficiencies.
2. Change incandescent or CFL lights to LEDs. They use half the energy and last twice as long. They're durable and produce more light. This change can pay back in savings in less than a year.
3. Have the HVAC system tuned up annually and change filters at least every 3 months.



## **Lastly, consult a professional for major upgrades.**

1. Get professional advice on energy upgrades such as replacement windows, spray foam insulation, new HVAC, or solar power.
2. Local non-profits can perform home energy audits and provide other home energy expertise at a low cost.
3. Dominion Energy offers rebate programs for energy efficient equipment.
4. Don't forget to re-benchmark your total energy use one year after making improvements to measure your success!