



# A Guide To Using & Understanding Energy-Efficient Appliances

It is possible to save energy to benefit the environment while saving money on your utility bill. Purchasing energy-efficient appliances and operating them at their maximum energy savings potential is one way to do this. Check out the following tips and suggestions and start shaving dozens of dollars off of your gas, electric and water bills.

## The Refrigerator

Refrigerators are one of the biggest energy guzzling appliances in your home, consuming 27 percent of the total electricity used. Cut down on that percentage by:

- Getting rid of a second refrigerator. Older models require more electricity to run than new ones.
- Limiting the number of times you open the door.
- Checking your door sealing. Get a 150-watt flood lamp, put it in the refrigerator and shut the door. Then, turn off the room light and try to see light through the door seal. Move the light around within the refrigerator to view all sides of the seal and use a mirror to check the bottom seal. If you can see light, think about replacing the seal (which can be expensive) or possibly replacing the entire refrigerator.
- Cover all foods and drinks placed in the refrigerator.
- Make sure that the refrigerator is kept at least partially full.
- Locate the refrigerator away from sources of heat such as sunlight, ovens and dishwashers.

## The Stove

An oven is powered by either gas or electricity. Cut costs by:

- Keeping burner pans clean to help reflect heat.

- Using a pressure-cooker instead of stove-top cooking, or a crockpot for dishes requiring long cooking periods.
- Matching the pan size to the size of the coils on an electric range surface.
- Making certain that pans rest evenly on the surface of the heat source.
- Cooking with tight-fitting lids.
- Using very little water to cook foods. Start with the dial on high and turn down to simmer.
- Cook several dishes at once and freeze excess portions to be reheated later.
- Using the preheat dial sparingly or not at all.
- Avoiding opening the oven door.

## The Washer & Dryer

Washing machines and dryers expend much energy to clean and dry clothes. Ninety percent of a washer's energy goes toward heating the water. Here are a few ways to reduce the temperature and length of time these appliances are in use in order to save energy:

- Select lower water levels for smaller loads.
- Wash one big load rather than two small ones.
- Front-loading washing machines can save you one-third more energy and water than top-loading machines.
- Use lower temperature settings and "pre-soak" for soiled clothing.
- Always use a cold water rinse.
- Turn down the thermostat on your water heater to 120 degrees.
- Load the washer to capacity.
- Use the right amount of detergent.

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- Install the washing machine close to the water heater and insulate the hot pipes leading to it.
- Gas dryers save more energy than electric dryers.
- Purchase a dryer with automatic shut-off.
- Remove clothes from the dryer while still damp and hang up to avoid ironing.
- Buy a dryer vent hood from your appliance salesperson to block air infiltration.
- Separate and dry similar materials together.
- Dry two or more loads in a row.
- Clean the dryer (lint) filter after each use.
- Check the outside dryer exhaust vent. Make certain that it is clean and that the flap opens and closes freely.

## The Dishwasher

Similar to a washing machine, the energy used by dishwashers goes toward heating the water (nearly 80 percent!). Apply some of these tips to keep your energy usage at a minimum:

- Contrary to some beliefs, when used efficiently, a dishwasher saves more water than washing by hand.
- Use an “energy saver” wash cycle for light loads.
- Select a “no heat” dry. If you do not have this option, at the end of the cycle, open the dishwasher’s door to allow the dishes to air dry.
- Wash only full loads.
- Operate the dishwasher during the less expensive “non-peak” evening hours.

If you need additional information, call the **Ohio Consumers’ Counsel** toll-free, 1-877-742-5622 or 614-466-8574 or write: 77 South High Street, 15th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43266-0550.

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## ENERGYGUIDE Labels

EnergyGuide labels are placed on certain appliances to inform potential buyers of the yearly energy costs of the appliance. The labels are required to be placed on the following: refrigerators/freezers, freezers, water heaters, dishwashers, clothes washers and room air conditioners. The energy costs of these seven appliances tend to vary greatly, which is the reason for the required label.

Labels contain the following types of information:

1. The top portion of the label contains the manufacturer name, model number, type of appliance and its capacity.
2. The largest number is a yearly energy cost estimate. This number can vary according to the area in which you live and the fluctuation of energy prices. It may be a good idea to rely on the yearly cost table (see #4) to find out the cost of running the appliance on a yearly basis. For air conditioners, the yearly energy cost estimate is actually an energy efficiency rating (EER). The higher the EER rating, the more efficient the air conditioner.
3. A line scale reveals how the appliance’s energy efficiency compares with similar models, from lowest to highest. Be aware that the labels are not updated regularly and may not be accurate.
4. In order to pinpoint your yearly energy cost more exactly, check out the yearly cost table. You must know the price you pay per kilowatt-hour of electricity or per therm of natural gas. Do this by dividing the total amount of your bill by the total amount of kilowatt-hours or therms used.

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