

8 ways your employees can save energy while working from home



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With most businesses having implemented work-from-home policies or being required to close their buildings amidst the growing health crisis, many Albertans are now working from home. With the utility bill burden shifted, learn how these simple energy efficiency habits can help your employees save power at the home office.

Lowering those work-from-home energy bills

Between lighting, heating and office equipment (computers, monitors, printers, etc.) it takes a lot of energy to power a home office. Given that so many people are now staying home and working from home, residential power and gas usage will inevitably rise. With potential concerns over rising utility bills, businesses can help their employees make the best of their new tele-working situation with the following ideas:

1. **Turn off your computer and monitor(s) when not in use** – even if you are away from them only for a short time. Screensavers don't reduce energy consumption. Turning off computer accessories (speakers, printers, etc.) when not in use can help further. Switching your computer on and off will have no significant effect on its operation or lifespan.
2. **Use a laptop** – Laptops use about 80 per cent less power than desktop computers (about 15 watts, as compared to 80-160 watts for desktop computers) and are designed to be more efficient.
3. **Unplug all electronics or use a power bar** – Unplugging electronics when you're not using them for extended periods of time will save energy and protect your devices from power surges. Or, try plugging multiple electronic devices into a power bar so they can easily be switched off all at once.
4. **Revisit your thermostat temperature** – Heating and air conditioning account for the largest electricity use (46 per cent) in the typical home. Turning the temperature down even a few degrees (or if you have a smart thermostat, adjusting the schedule) can have a big impact on home heating bills. Wear a sweater and/or slippers to stay comfortable.
5. **Open the curtains** – Opening all curtains and blinds in the morning (especially on south-facing sides) allows light in and helps provide heat, saving you power on desk lamps and overhead lights as well as reducing home heating. Likewise, closing them at night keeps heat in. Bonus: natural light is known to boost one's mood.
6. **Position your work area near a window** – If possible, sit near a window or other bright area to take advantage of daylight and avoid the need for desk lamps and room lighting during the daytime.
7. **Rely on task lighting** – When the sun goes down task lighting (using desktop lamps or targeted track lights) is a better option than ambient lighting, which illuminates the entire room. Task lighting focuses on small areas and provides light where you need it.

8. **Clean and maintain home appliances** – Appliances make up about 13 per cent of the energy use in a typical home. Replacing your furnace filter, regularly cleaning behind and underneath your fridge to maintain airflow and removing lint after each load in your dryer are some easy ways to get better energy efficiency out of your appliances without leaving the house.

For more ways to save energy:

- Direct Energy: [What uses the most electricity in my home?](#)
- Epcor: [8 ways to save energy while you wait for spring](#)
- ATCO: [Winter energy saving tips](#)