

# ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN APARTMENTS



A renter's guide to saving  
energy and money.



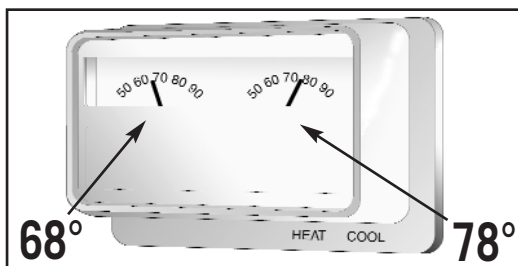
Kansas City  
Power & Light®

**S**aving energy and controlling costs are as important to apartment dwellers as they are to homeowners. But energy improvements probably aren't the answer. Most aren't practical or the pay-back periods are longer than residents expect to stay. Still, you can save energy and money by changing the ways you use electricity without sacrificing comfort or convenience.

## HEATING AND COOLING COST THE MOST AND CAN SAVE THE MOST.

**Y**our air conditioner and furnace use more energy than all other appliances combined, so start energy savings here.

**SET YOUR THERMOSTAT** at 78° in the summer and 68° in the winter initially. Then adjust the settings to match your comfort needs. Each degree above 78° or below 68° means about 3-5% additional savings. And, you shouldn't notice the difference in room temperature.

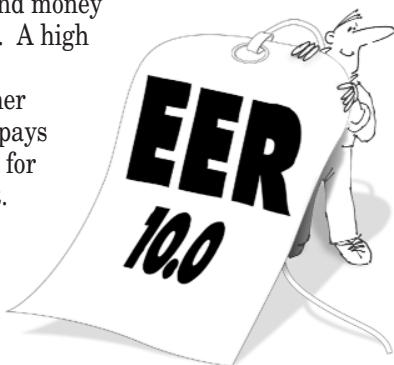


Before leaving on vacation, turn the air conditioner off (in winter, lower the thermostat 10°). Give your air conditioning system a rest too. Then, have a relative turn it on the day before you return. Your savings could pay for a meal or two on your trip.

**GET A COOLING TUNE-UP.** Treat your central air conditioner like you treat your car. Each spring, ask your landlord to have it tuned-up by a trained professional. The service call should include a refrigerant check (according to manufacturers' recommended procedures), lubrication of the fan motors, and a thorough cleaning of the coils.

**REPLACE DIRTY AIR FILTERS.** Heating and cooling systems clean the air by drawing it through a filter. But, when the air filter becomes clogged with dirt, the air conditioner or furnace must work harder to circulate air, costing you more to operate. Change filters every six weeks in the height of the heating and cooling season, it's money in your pocket. You might want to have your apartment manager set up a yearly maintenance procedure.

**WHEN YOU BUY A NEW ROOM AIR CONDITIONER,** select one with an EER of 10 or higher. If you do not own your air conditioner, ask your landlord to replace it when the time comes with a high Energy Efficiency Ratio (EER) unit. EER is a rating of an air conditioner's operating efficiency. The higher the number, the more energy and money you save. A high EER air conditioner actually pays you back for buying it.



## KEEP INSIDE AIR IN, AND OUTSIDE AIR OUT.

**Y**ou pay a lot to heat and cool the air in your apartment. You don't need to heat and cool the air outside. The more effectively you prevent conditioned air from escaping, the more energy and money you save.

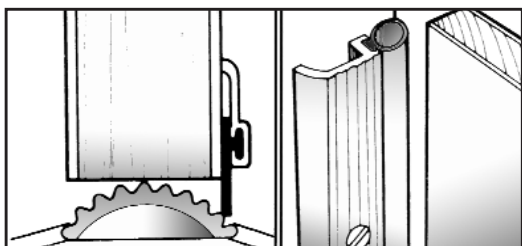
### **STORM WINDOWS HELP IN**

**WINTER.** Single-glazed windows (one thickness of glass) offer almost no resistance to heat flow, so you need good storm windows to keep conditioned air in your apartment. If storms aren't provided by the apartment management, consider covering your windows with polyethylene



sheeting or sheet acrylic plastic (both available at hardware stores at minimal cost). Large glass patio or balcony doors especially need attention.

**WEATHERSTRIP WINDOWS AND DOORS.** A small crack around a door or window allows a surprising amount of air to escape. Seal doors and windows with manufactured weatherstripping like rolled vinyl and door



sweeps. You not only save money, you prevent uncomfortable drafts. This is important for both winter and summer savings.

**WHEN YOUR FIREPLACE ISN'T IN USE, CLOSE THE DAMPER.** Smoke goes up the chimney and heated air will, too, if you don't keep the damper closed. Consider installing glass fireplace doors to cut down on air infiltration.

**THOROUGHLY SEAL "THROUGH-THE-WALL" OR WINDOW AIR CONDITIONERS.** Where your air conditioner (usually a window style unit) is built into the wall, seal top, bottom and sides with duct tape or caulking. Do the same around side panels for a unit placed in a window.

## **CONTROLLING THE SUN HELPS CONTROL YOUR ENERGY BILLS.**

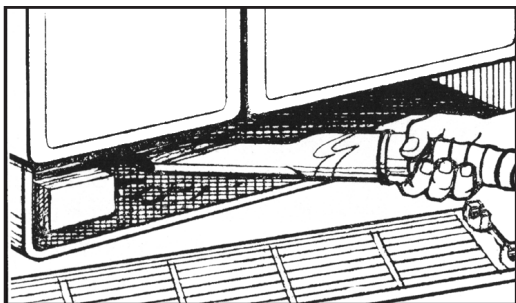
If you think solar heating is a futuristic technology, think again. Sun shining through a window in winter provides a lot of heat and you can easily make it work for you and your bank account.

**USE CURTAINS, BLINDS AND SHADES TO HELP HEAT AND COOL.** Heat from bright sun is fine in the winter, so open curtains and shades to let the sunshine in. During the summer, however, keep the heat outside by drawing curtains and blinds during the day. Your air conditioner will thank you by lowering your energy bill. If you're worried about house plants not getting enough light, buy a special plant light. It costs a lot less to operate than air conditioning.

## PRACTICE WISE ENERGY USE WITH ALL APPLIANCES AND ELECTRONICS

**OPERATE YOUR DISHWASHER WITH FULL LOADS.** Running a dishwasher for only a few plates and glasses is an expensive way to clean dishes. Store dirty dishes in the washer until you have a full load. For even greater savings, turn the washer off after the final rinse and set the switch to “air dry.”

**DON'T OVERWORK YOUR REFRIGERATOR.** The more your refrigerator's compressor must run, the more it costs you. Don't let refrigerated air escape while you decide what



looks good. Or allow a loose or worn gasket around the door to waste refrigerated air.

### **VACUUM OR CLEAN DUST FROM THE CONDENSER COILS AT LEAST TWICE A YEAR.**

Set controls properly. Trying to turn the refrigerator into a freezer by lowering the setting more than suggested by the manufacturer is very expensive. If the unit has a power saver switch, **use it.**

### **A FULL FREEZER THAT'S FREE OF FROST SAVES MONEY.**

Food retains cold better than air, so a full freezer will operate more efficiently than an empty one. If your freezer isn't a frost-free model, it is best to defrost it before the frost accumulates to 1/4 inch.

**DON'T TURN YOUR RANGE AND OVEN INTO A SPACE HEATER.** Your range is designed to cook food, not to heat your apartment. So you could damage the heating elements in addition to wasting money by using your range as a heater. Even being an “oven peeper” and opening the door periodically to check the progress of your culinary creations costs you money. You let about 20% of the heat escape every time the door is opened. Use a timer or meat thermometer, and stop peeking. Matching pan size to the size of the surface element helps, too.

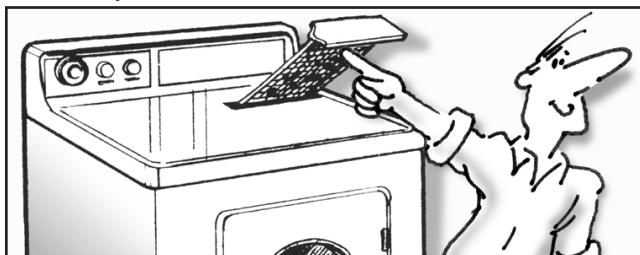
**LITTLE APPLIANCES CAN SAVE BIG BUCKS.** Slow cookers, broiler and toaster ovens, fry pans, etc. save energy when you're cooking smaller quantities. They also add less heat to your apartment, reducing the cooling load of your air conditioner. Microwave ovens are energy savers. They use less energy to cook and add practically no heat.



**MATCH WATER LEVEL TO LOAD SIZE IN CLOTHES WASHERS.** Don't use more hot water than you need because it costs you to heat it. If the machine has only one water level, always wash a full load (if it's a coin-operated washer, that makes even more sense). Cold water washing can also put a few pennies in your pocket.

### **DON'T BAKE YOUR CLOTHES, JUST DRY THEM.**

Use the dryer for only as long as it takes to dry them properly. Dry full loads when possible and clean the lint trap. The dryer operates more efficiently when you do. If you have a dryer in your apartment, be sure the vent hose is connected properly and that the dryer is vented outdoors.



**DON'T PUT YOURSELF IN HOT WATER.** Your water heater may be heating water hotter than is necessary. (140° is probably needed only if you have a dishwasher, and some dishwashers even have their own internal booster heater.) Experiment to see how much the hot water temperature can be reduced and still give you water hot enough for your needs.

**IF YOU HAVE A WATERBED, SET ITS HEATER AT 85°.** Keep the bed covered by a spread or blanket to prevent heat from escaping.

**HOME COMPUTERS CAN TAKE A "BYTE" OUT OF YOUR BUDGET.** If you own a PC, your monitor uses more energy than your central processing unit (CPU). You can extend its life and save money by turning it off whenever it's not in use. Do the same with TVs and audio entertainment systems.

Protect all sensitive electronics and appliances against storm damage and costly replacement or repair costs with adequate surge protection. KCPL offers a complete line of whole-house and point-of-use surge protection options. For information, visit [kcpl.com](http://kcpl.com) or call (816) 472-0432.

## TURNING OFF LIGHTS HELPS A LITTLE, BUT WON'T SAVE A LOT.

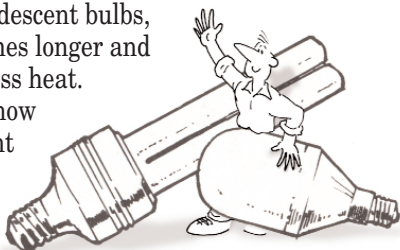
If your biggest conservation effort is switching off lights, you really won't see much difference in your energy bills. We encourage you to turn off lights when they're not needed—if everyone does it, we save energy—but, the truth is, lights usually aren't a significant part of your electric bill. It's a good practice, though, so here are some tips.

### FLUORESCENT LIGHTING IS MORE EFFICIENT AND LESS COSTLY TO USE.

If you have a choice, use fluorescent fixtures. They're three times more efficient than incandescent bulbs, last ten times longer and generate less heat.

There are now replacement fluorescent units available that

screw into regular incandescent sockets. They are expensive, however, and would only pay out over a number of years.



### USE LAMP SHADES THAT REFLECT LIGHT.

White or near white shade linings reflect rather than absorb light. Also, the shade should cut glare but not cut off light.

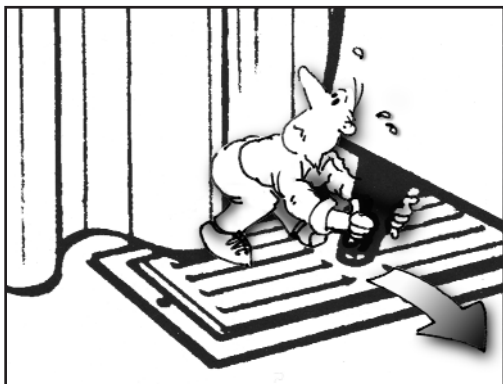
**DUST BULBS AND FIXTURES.** You'd be surprised at how much accumulated dust cuts down the amount of light you receive. Dust them regularly for a brighter room.

**TURN OFF LIGHTS WHEN NOT NEEDED.** If you don't need the light, why use the energy and burn out a bulb?

## GET IN THE HABIT OF SAVING ENERGY.

**T**here are many little ways you can save energy that can add up to a substantial savings. Here are a few. Maybe you can think of some more.

**DON'T ARRANGE FURNITURE SO IT OBSTRUCTS HEAT REGISTERS.** You may have to alter your ideal interior decorating plan, but you'll save money and be more comfortable if conditioned air is free to circulate properly.



**DON'T RUN KITCHEN OR BATH EXHAUST FANS LONGER THAN NEEDED.** Exhaust unwanted odors, but don't lose costly conditioned air.

**AVOID ADDING UNNECESSARY HEAT AND MOISTURE TO THE AIR CONDITIONING LOAD.**

Your air conditioner works very hard in the summer to cool and expel humidity. Help it by doing all your heat and moisture producing activities like dishwashing, laundry, bathing and even cooking during the cooler hours of the day—before 2 in the afternoon and after 8 in the evening.

### **TAKE SHOWERS RATHER THAN BATHS.**

Showers use less hot water if they are short. Restricted flow shower head and faucet attachments are available at minimal costs and can save several gallons of hot water each time you use them.

### **SHOP FOR ENERGY EFFICIENT APPLIANCES.**

More manufacturers are making appliances which use less energy. Look for them: energy efficient air conditioners, dishwashers, refrigerators and other major appliances with power saver switches; small appliances that do the same things



as bigger appliances. Consider the cost of operation as well as the cost of purchase. Think whether a convenience option on an appliance will cost you money over the long run. For example, a frost-free refrigerator uses more energy than a standard unit. Learn how much energy various appliances use.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ANY SPECIFIC ENERGY SAVING IDEA, WRITE:**

**The KCPL Energy Team  
P. O. Box 419877  
Kansas City, MO 64141**

# ENERGY STAR® LABELING — YOUR GUIDE TO ENERGY AND COST SAVINGS

**A** program of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Energy (DOE), ENERGY STAR® labeling is your assurance that products offer energy efficiency, save money on utility bills and help protect the environment. Look for the ENERGY STAR® label on appliances, office equipment, electronics, lighting fixtures and other products.

Because efficient products rely on higher quality components and advanced technologies, they cost a bit more to buy. But the extended service lives and operating cost savings you'll realize will pay back the difference over and over again.

Insist on ENERGY STAR®-labeled appliances whenever you're in the market for any of the products listed below:

- Clothes Washers
- Dishwashers
- TVs
- PCs
- Refrigerators
- Air conditioners
- VCRs
- Lighting

For more information, call their toll-free hotline at **1.888.STAR.YES**. Or visit their website at **[www.epa.gov/energystar](http://www.epa.gov/energystar)**.

**F**or energy advice of all kinds plus products and services to save you money and eliminate problems, visit **[kcpl.com](http://kcpl.com)**. Colorful, fast, fun and friendly, it's your one-stop, energy information destination.

