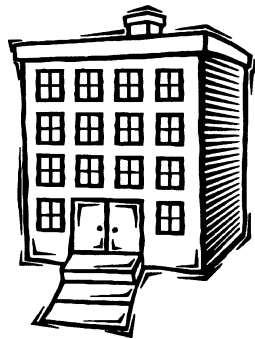


What About Apartments?

■ Shading ■ Air-sealing ■ Water heating ■ Lighting ■ Heating and Cooling

Although most apartments are smaller than single family houses, their energy costs can be greater. While increasing insulation levels, and sealing air leaks in the building shell and ductwork make good sense for apartments, these measures are usually too costly to repay their price in energy savings in a time period acceptable for most renters. Apartment dwellers need not be doomed to high energy bills and discomfort. Let's look at a few energy saving ideas that should save enough to pay for themselves within two years or are easily taken to a new home.



Keep the sun's heat out

Over 30% of your air conditioning bill can be due to sunlight streaming through unshaded windows. East and west facing windows are usually the biggest problems. Keeping direct sunlight from passing through these

windows is important. Be creative. One apartment dweller with a green thumb grew beans in a pot with a trellis that provided cooling shade for a west facing sliding glass door.

If you cannot shade problem windows outside, then consider an inside solution. Window films can be glued to the inside glass surface and reflect heat back through the pane. Make sure the apartment owner does not restrict the use of films as they are expensive to buy and difficult to remove. A white pull-down shade is also effective at bouncing sunlight back through a window. Close shades and shutters during the day to keep room temperatures cooler.

Tighten windows and doors

The amount of air that leaks through the cracks around windows and doors can be more important for apartments than houses. Simple weatherstripping and caulking can be energy smart investments. Choose products that will last such as vinyl or metal weatherstripping and latex acrylic or silicone caulk. Try to caulk inside whenever possible to protect the sealant from weather.

Cut hot water bills

The cost of electricity for heating water for a typical family of four can be over \$400 a year. Propane water heating is about \$260 a year; natural gas is about \$150. You can often cut that bill significantly with simple conservation measures. Start with the temperature setting. Water at 120°F is plenty hot for most families. Temperatures higher than this pose a serious risk of scalding, especially for children and the elderly. Check the hot

water temperature with a cooking thermometer (one that measures between 100°F and 160°F) at the faucet farthest from the water heater.

Wrapping the water heater tank with an insulation jacket can save \$10 to \$40 a year. The jackets can be purchased at many hardware or building supply stores for less than \$25. You can insulate both gas and electric water heaters. Follow safety instructions provided by the manufacturer.

A water-saving showerhead can save many families over \$70 a year. These models provide a forceful shower but are engineered to use less water. They are ideal for larger families. Since they use less water, the last person in line stands a better chance of getting a hot shower.

Save money on lighting

We all remember our parents' admonishments to turn off lights, and while they were right, you can usually save much more by changing standard incandescent light bulbs to more efficient models. The new compact fluorescent light bulbs provide more light for less money. While these bulbs cost between \$10 to \$20 each, they save between \$30 to \$60 in electricity over their life. They should last around 10,000 hours versus less than 1,000 for a standard incandescent bulb. They are best suited for lights that are on at least 4 hours each day. Many models work well outside, too, so don't overlook a security light that is frequently left on.

Adjust your thermostat

The temperature at which you set your thermostat can affect your heating and cooling bills. In winter, try a setting of 65°F to 68°F and wear warm clothing. In summer, a setting of 78°F and light weight, loose-fitting clothing should work. When air conditioning, use ceiling and space fans to circulate room air. You could feel as comfortable at a setting of 80°F to 85°F in summer with fans circulating the air as at 78°F with no air flow.

A programmable thermostat can automatically adjust room temperature to save energy during unoccupied times. You can often replace an existing thermostat with an energy saving programmable one. The programmable thermostat can be taken with you if you move. Be sure to choose a model that is appropriate for your particular heating and cooling equipment (heat pumps require a special type). Choose one that you understand how to use.