

Green Tips

November 2006

Tips for the Home (reducing electricity use)

Puget Sound Energy gets more than 56% of its power from non-renewable fossil fuels – that is, coal (30%) and natural gas (26%)! Reduce your electrical power use at home by:

1. Using a power strip with an on/off switch for computers, DVD players, TV's, stereos, TiVo, etc.
 - Remember that most modern electrical/electronic gear burns electricity even when it appears to be “off”, unless you actually shut off the power to the unit (e.g. by power strip).
 - Completely shut off your computer. When in “sleep” or “standby” mode, computers are still burning energy.
 - Most modern appliances have internal batteries that will save data for days or weeks, so there is no need to be in standby mode – check the owners manuals if you have a concern.
2. Remember the clothes line? Try using one year-round (indoors during the winter and outdoors at other times). You will save money and have no static cling!
3. Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents, especially in areas where lights tend to stay on for a long time, such as the kitchen and bathrooms. Compact fluorescents are more economical over the long run, even with their higher initial price, because they last much longer and use ¼ the energy for the same amount of light.
4. Count the number of light fixtures (and individual bulbs) in your home; you will be sobered (or horrified) by the number. Consider a lamp (with a compact fluorescent bulb) rather than turning on overhead lights that in many modern homes means four or more recessed (“canned”) lights using 100 watts each start blazing away.
5. In winter, turn the thermostat's heat setting down a bit and wear long sleeves indoors. Use a programmable thermostat with a timer that allows you to set it to drop the indoor temperature even lower when everyone is away and at night when everyone is nestled under cozy comforters. Most folks are home and active less than 8 hours every day.
6. Once the old ones expire, convert to flat panel computer and TV screens, which use less energy. Remember to properly recycle or dispose of the old tubes – they contain some nasty chemicals.
7. Consider paying a few dollars each month to PSE for “Green Power” -- a program that puts more green energy into the PSE power grid. With all of the energy savings contained in the ideas list above, you will still come out ahead!