

major appliances

The Facts :

A hundred years ago, electricity was a luxury. Today we cannot live without it. But even though we take electricity for granted, we need to remember to use it wisely. Using electricity wisely is good for the environment, saves money in your home and keeps the electricity supply more reliable.

Most major appliances now display the energy rating of the model, which makes it easier for consumers to compare models that best suit their needs.

Food Refrigeration :

- ▶▶ Avoid putting a second refrigerator in the garage. In the summer months, the temperature in the garage can easily exceed 100°F, and the refrigerator has to work extra hard to keep food cold.
- ▶▶ On older units, vacuum clean the condenser coils of refrigerators and freezers (in the back or at the bottom) every three months or so. Dust-covered coils impair the efficiency of compressor operation and increase energy usage.
- ▶▶ Door gaskets on refrigerators and freezers should seal tightly against the frames to prevent infiltration of warm air. To check the condition of the gasket, place a dollar bill against the frame and close the door. If the bill can be pulled out with a gentle tug or, worse still, simply drops out on its own, the door requires adjustment or the gasket needs replacing.
- ▶▶ Do not place uncovered liquids in refrigerators. In addition to absorbing undesirable flavours, the liquids give off vapours that add to the compressor workload.

- ▶▶ Allow hot foods or liquids to cool off before placing them in the refrigerator. The cooling-off period should not effect the taste of the food and will reduce the load on the refrigerator.

Cooking :

- ▶▶ To cook efficiently, heat must be transferred from the electric cooking element to the food with minimum loss to the surroundings. To help do this, select pots and pans with absolutely flat bottoms. Spherical bottoms leave an air gap that provides an escape route for heat.
- ▶▶ Develop the habit of “lids-on” cooking. Tightly fitted lids help keep heat within pots and pans, permitting the use of lower temperature settings and shorter cooking times.
- ▶▶ Begin cooking on highest heat until liquid begins to boil. Then lower the heat control setting and allow food to simmer until fully cooked.
- ▶▶ When preheating an oven for baking, time the preheat period carefully. Five to eight minutes should be sufficient. There is no need to preheat for broiling or roasting.
- ▶▶ Activate the self-cleaning cycle on an electric oven only for major cleaning jobs. Wipe up minor spills and splatters with a damp cloth. When self-cleaning is necessary, start the cycle right after cooking, while the oven is still hot, or wait until late evening hours when electricity use is lowest.

Clothes Washing :

- ▶▶ Follow detergent instructions carefully. ‘Oversudsing’ actually hampers effective washing action and may require more energy in the form of extra rinses.

- ▶▶ Washing machines with higher spin speeds can extract more water and reduce drying time, which saves energy.

Clothes Drying :

- ▶▶ Avoid over-drying. This not only represents a waste of energy but harms fabrics as well.
- ▶▶ Dry towels and heavier cottons in a separate load from clothes and lighter weights.

Televisions :

- ▶▶ LCD (liquid crystal display) TVs typically use less electricity than a plasma. Rear projection televisions are typically more efficient than both LCD’s and plasmas. Running a plasma TV for three hours per day will use about 371 kiloWatt-hours (kWh), while the LCD TV will use about 231 kWh per year.

Other Electronics :

- ▶▶ The average home uses 24 electronic products for up to 15% of household electricity use. Turn off these products when they are not in use. Or, use a power strip as a central “turn off” point when you are finished using equipment. This will help eliminate the standby power consumption used by many electronics even when they are turned off (e.g. video games, computers, cable boxes, stereos).

