# Lower Your Utility Bills

Gas and electric bills are often expensive. Here are some ways to save money and energy:

- Load your dishwasher, washing machine and dryer to full capacity. Use the shortest cycle that will get your dishes and clothes clean. If possible, turn off the dishwasher before the drying cycle and let the dishes air dry.
- Line dry your clothes or, if using a dryer, run the next load while the dryer is still warm in order to fully utilize the energy it took for the dryer to heat. Clean dryer air filters between loads to boost drying efficiency.
- Set the water heater thermostat at 140 degrees or "normal" if you have a dishwasher. Otherwise, set it at 120 degrees or "low." Wash clothes using only cold or warm water. Sheets and towels need to be washed in hot water for good hygiene.
- Install low-flow showerheads. Take short showers instead of baths to reduce hot water usage. Turn off water while “soaping up” or washing hair.
- Defrost freezers before ice buildup becomes 1/4-inch thick if not frost free. Clean the coils on the back or bottom of the refrigerator regularly.
- Use energy-saving settings on appliances. Newer-model appliances use much less electricity than older models.
- Close the damper when the fireplace is not being used. Don’t use the fireplace and central heating system at the same time. Close heating vents in rooms that are not used often.
- Weather-strip around windows and doors. Wrap water heater in an insulating blanket to minimize heat loss.
- Set the thermostat at 68 degrees or lower, health permitting. Three to five percent more energy is used for each degree the furnace is set above 68 degrees. Clean or replace furnace filters regularly, following manufacturer's instructions.
- Use LED or compact fluorescent light bulbs. They utilize one fourth of the energy of incandescent bulbs and last ten times longer. For more details, see the Cost Comparison Chart on the following page.
- Fix defective plumbing or dripping faucets. A single dripping hot water faucet can waste 212 gallons of water a month, increasing the gas and electric bill for heating the extra water in addition to an increased water bill.
- Make sure appliances and lights are turned off when not in use. Unplug anything you do not use frequently.
- Consider alternate cooking appliances. An electric stove consumes as much as 90 percent more energy than a microwave.
- Protect your investment by plugging all electronics into a surge protector. For computers, turn on “sleep” mode rather than leaving them on the screen saver.

# Cost Comparison between LEDs, CFLs and Incandescent light bulbs

| | LED | CFL | Incandescent |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Light bulb projected lifespan** | **50,000 hours** | **10,000 hours** | **1,200 hours** |
| **Watts per bulb (equiv. 60 watts)** | 10 | **14** | **60** |
| **Cost per bulb** | **$35.95** | **$3.95** | **$1.25** |
| **KWh of electricity used over 50,000 hours** | **300 500** | **700** | **3000** |
| **Cost of electricity (@ 0.10per KWh)** | **$50** | **$70** | **$300** |
| **Bulbs needed for 50k hours of use** | **1** | **5** | **42** |
| **Equivalent 50k hours bulb expense** | **$35.95** | **$19.75** | **$52.50** |
| **Total cost for 50k hours** | **$85.75** | **$89.75** | **$352. 50** |

**Energy Savings over 50,000 hours, assuming 25 bulbs per household:**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Total cost for 25 bulbs** | **$2,143.75** | **$2,243.75** | **$8,812.50** |
| **Savings to household by switching from incandescents** | **$6,668.75** | **$6,568.75** | **0** |

**Notes:**

- Cost of electricity will vary. The figures used above are for comparison only, and are not exact. Residential energy costs among the various states range from 28.53 cents (Hawaii) to 6.34 cents (Idaho) per KWH.
- The cost per bulb for LEDs may vary. We used the figure of $35.95 (for a 60 watt equivalent LED bulb) as an average among lighting retailers.
- Estimates of bulb lifespan are projected, since it would take about 6 years of continuous lighting to test. Some manufacturers claim the new LED bulbs will last up to 25 years under normal household use, but this is not proven.
- Bulb breakage and bulb replacement costs have not been factored into this comparison chart. Incandescent bulbs and CFL bulbs are more easily broken than LEDs, which increases their cost of use.
- Most LEDs come with a minimum 2-year guarantee. Any defective LED bulb will usually fail within this time.

*Source: Eartheasy.com*

Updated 02/12