

6 Ways to Reduce Your Company's Electric Bill This Winter

By Brian Horn

Although the majesty of a pristine white winter landscape is beautiful to behold, it can do some serious damage to a budget, due to the increase in energy costs.

This is especially true for business owners who experience a substantial increase in their overhead expenses due to the rising energy demands throughout winter, which in turn can negatively impact their bottom line.

1.) Work With Energy Brokers

"Consumers and business owners alike are often unaware that they can negotiate their energy costs. They simply call the supplier and ask to have their power hooked up without using their power to negotiate the best deal for their business or home," said energy broker Mikhail Skachko.

Brokers ask several important questions to determine the energy demands of their clients before making a recommendation.

Some of the frequently asked questions are:

- What time do you open your business?*
- What time do you close?*
- What type of machinery do you use?*
- Do you have walk in coolers?*
- What is your business peak demand?*
- What is your load factor?*

The answers to these questions help determine what type of product and terms the client needs.

Then, they can request quotes from top tier suppliers and compare them to each other to determine which company is offering the best deal.

2.) Install A Programmable Thermostat

Regardless if you are dealing with a residence or a business, installing a programmable thermostat will save you money on your energy costs.

The programmable thermostat gives you the ability to reduce the thermostat temperature when no one is in the office or at home, and then automatically raises it again to ensure it is comfortable before everyone would arrive once again, per your programmed settings.

Since heating and cooling costs make up a majority of a business or home's energy costs, using a programmable thermostat will help you cut down on your energy expenses substantially.

3.) Make Sure Your Heating and Air Unit Is Working Properly

Make sure that your business and home's air ducts are in good shape by having them checked yearly.

The average duct system leaks anywhere from 15 to 20 percent; therefore, making sure yours are well sealed and are not leaking is another way to ensure you are not paying for more energy than you actually need.

Also make sure to regularly change your air filters and to have your unit cleaned by professionals on a regular basis.

4.) Review Your Provider

This can be done by calling your current provider and other competitors in your area to see what the best deal is for you.

There are also mobile apps to help simplify this process.

One option, EZ PowerApp was invented to help consumers take the control back when it comes to their electricity and natural gas.

"The beauty of the app is that it does not care which provider you select it only serves the purpose of being unbiased platform to provide you with an opportunity of having a choice in the palm of your hand," said creator Mikhail Skachko.

5.) Power Down Electronics

Another way to reduce energy waste and thus save yourself some money is to turn off all the electronic devices when not in use. Seems simple, but amazingly many people overlook this basic action.

At your business, ask everyone to make sure their computers and lights are off before leaving for the day and set all computers to go to sleep when they are inactive for longer than 30 minutes.

You may wonder if this will actually save you any substantial amount of money. Rest assured, the EPA estimates that turning computers, printers and copiers off at night and having them go to sleep when inactive will save anywhere from \$50 to \$150 annually per device.

Of course, that number will fluctuate based on the type of device and how much energy it demands, but it will yield some savings in every case. In a residential setting, programming laptops and desktop computers to power off when not in use along with shutting off energy draining electronics such as TVs will serve the same purpose.

6.) Be Aware Of Outside Factors That Can Help Reduce Energy Costs

According to the San Diego Office of Sustainability, three well-placed trees can successfully reduce a building's cooling costs in the summer. In the winter, you can use trees for a natural wind break due to the fact that trees can successfully reduce wind speeds by up to 50 percent, thus making it easier for your heat your building

Therefore, you can see the impact having a few well-placed trees can have on your energy costs, year round.

As you can see, there are many ways to successfully reduce your energy costs this winter. Simply follow the tips listed above and remember you can negotiate with your energy supplier, and you will be well on your way to a more energy efficient office and home.

*Featured in [The Huffington Post](#)
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