

PULL THE PLUG ON PHANTOM LOAD

It's easy to stop phantom load from adding to your electric bill; you just have to know where to find it.



When plugged in, appliances and chargers use electricity whether they're on or not. This wasted power is called phantom load. Phantom load costs U.S. consumers more than \$3 billion a year and adds up to the output of several power plants.

According to the Consumer Electronics Association, 75 percent of the electricity used to power most electronics is used while they're off. This accounts for 4 to 7 percent of every home's electricity usage.

Save some green by turning off and unplugging what you can, possibly reducing your home's phantom load by as much as one third. If we all work to eliminate unnecessary phantom load, we can save more of Earth's natural resources and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

If an appliance isn't used regularly, unplug it. For the tangle of cords and power converters behind your stereo system and computer, get a power strip. By turning off the power strip, you'll power off all components at once. Advanced technology power

strips now automatically turn off and on peripheral equipment when you turn your computer or television off and on.

Items most likely to have phantom load are those that:

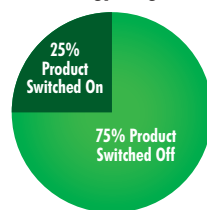
Use remote controls – Stereos, VCRs, DVD players, window air conditioners and TVs fall into this category.

Have digital displays or clocks – A clock on some appliances makes sense; a clock on others doesn't. Plugging these types of appliances into on/off switches makes better sense. And if you haven't used your VCR in a while, unplug it.

Require external power supply – Look for appliances using power cords with boxes and lights, like laptop computers, printers, video game units and modems. These power supplies usually stay on after the appliance is off.

Use battery chargers – Some rechargers stay on regardless of whether they've finished or not. Unplug your cell phone, MP3 player, laptop computer, power tools and other small rechargeable appliances when not in use.

Consumer Electronics Products' Lifetime Energy Usage



Look for ENERGY STAR®-qualified products and others with no or low standby power consumption when replacing or buying new appliances.

HIGH-ENERGY TELEVISION



If you've noticed your electricity usage is a little higher than usual lately, there's a good chance you've purchased a new high-definition television.

Most LCD and plasma televisions use energy wisely; however, these sets, reaching 42", 50", 65" up to 103" in size, are giants compared to tube TVs, and it takes more energy to light up their screens. In fact, some large HDTVs consume more electricity than a standard kitchen refrigerator, up to 500 kilowatt hours every year.

To get more energy efficiency from your HDTV:

Buy an ENERGY STAR®-qualified television, which uses about 40 percent less energy than other sets. The EPA now has tougher ENERGY STAR 4.1 specifications for televisions. ENERGY STAR-qualified televisions consume 1 watt or less in standby mode.

Lower the brightness and contrast levels of your plasma or LCD television, which will lower the amount of energy it uses.

Similarly, most LCD TV sets have adjustable backlights that consume less power when turned down. Many newer LCD models offer backlights that automatically adjust to use less power projecting darker shots.

If you're not actively watching the television, turn it off. And if you have a tendency to fall asleep with the TV on, set the TV's timer function to turn off the set whenever you request.

Watching TV at high volumes takes more energy, so turn it down and save. And if you run the audio through a separate amplifier, use it only for DVDs and programs that showcase the technology.

Turn off television accessories, such as VCRs, DVD players and amplifiers, after using them.

Cut the room light to make your screen look brighter and reduce light bulb use.

If you're choosing a new TV based solely on energy consumption, there are two rules of thumb: first, the smaller the HDTV the less energy it will use; and second, LCD televisions generally are more energy efficient than plasma televisions.

Following these suggestions could help reduce your HDTV's energy consumption. Visit www.midamericanenergy.com/ee for more energy-saving tips.



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