

Tips for Renters: Be More Energy Efficient!

By Sue Counts

According to the 2000 Census, up to 47 percent of the people living in Watauga's most populous zip code, 28607, rent their residences. Over the past few weeks, this column has offered tips on how to make your home and your habits "greener." Many suggestions can apply to those who rent as well as those who own their homes. Below is a list of tips specifically designed for renters:

- Lighting is one of the easiest places to start. Replacing your five most frequently used light fixtures or the bulbs in them with ENERGY STAR qualified lights can save more than \$60 a year in energy costs. ENERGY STAR qualified compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) provide high-quality light output, use less energy, and last 6–10 times longer than standard incandescent light bulbs, saving money on energy bills and replacement costs.
- Keep your thermostat turned down while you're away from home or sleeping.
- Consumer electronics play an increasingly larger role in energy consumption, accounting for 15 percent of household electricity use. Many consumer electronics products use energy even when switched off. Electronics equipment that has earned the ENERGY STAR helps save energy when off, while maintaining features like clock displays, channel settings, and remote-control functions.
- A ten-minute shower uses less water than a bath. With a new 2.5 gallon-per-minute (low-flow) shower head, a 10-minute shower will use about 25 gallons of water, saving you five gallons of water over a typical bath. A low-flow showerhead also will save energy — up to \$145 each year on electricity.
- Make sure all air registers are clear of furniture so that air can circulate freely.
- During cold weather, take advantage of the sun's warmth by keeping drapes open during daylight hours. To keep out the heat of the summer sun, close window shades and drapes in warm weather.
- Save water by scraping dishes instead of rinsing them before loading in the dishwasher. Run your dishwasher with a full load and use the air-dry option if available.
- Wash your laundry with cold water whenever possible. To save water, try to wash full loads or, if you must wash a partial load, reduce the level of water appropriately.
- Do not over-dry your laundry. One of the easiest things you can do to increase drying efficiency is to clean the lint trap before each and every load. This step also can save you up to \$34 each year.

Adapted with permission from <http://energystar.gov/home>

