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Home Energy Usage Inspection Checklist

Family Circle Articles

Whole-House "Energy" Budget Guide: Save Thousands!

By Al Ubell and Label Shulman

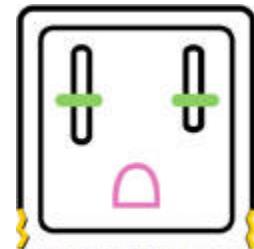
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As a homeowner, are you an exceptional saver or a hopeless spendthrift? Take our quiz and find out. Place a check after the statement that best describes your household habits. This checklist will help you identify the holes in your budget so you can start saving thousands.

✓ 10 Steps to Energy Wisdom:

1. ___ Home Thermostat
2. ___ HVAC Systems
3. ___ Water Heater
4. ___ Water Faucets
5. ___ Water Consumption
6. ___ Washer/Dryer Appliances
7. ___ Fridge
8. ___ Lighting
9. ___ Home Insulation
10. ___ Home Windows



Energy Diva says,
"Get energy wise!"
Divier Masati

What Kind of Energy Guru are You?

A=Spendthrift [0pt]

B=Average Homeowner [10pts]

C=Very Smart [15pts]

E=Exceptional Saver [20pts]

Check off your habit and add your points when done!

Home Thermostat

- A. ___ You never lower the temperature on your manually operated thermostat.
- B. ___ Your heating system has a single-setback thermostat, but you can't change the temperature.
- C. ___ A single-setback thermostat operates for both night and day settings.
- D. ___ Your heating system is equipped with a double-setback thermostat.

HVAC Systems

- A. ____ You have your home heating and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems serviced only when they break down.
- B. ____ You never turn off the HVAC systems in any of the unoccupied rooms in your home.
- C. ____ Your HVAC systems are cleaned once a year.
- D. ____ Your HVAC filters are cleaned or replaced once a month and periodically tested by a professional for energy efficiency.

Water Heater

- A. ____ Your water heater has no insulation jacket.
- B. ____ Your water heater is insulated but has never been cleaned.
- C. ____ Your water heater has an insulation jacket and is serviced periodically.
- D. ____ Your heater is a newer model, which has a high energy-saving rating.

Water Faucets

- A. ____ Your home has several leaky faucets.
- B. ____ You have one leaky faucet that has been dripping for a month.
- C. ____ You hire outside help to repair leaky faucets.
- D. ____ You have leaky faucets repaired and have aerators installed.

Water Consumption

- A. ____ You always take long hot baths, never showers.
- B. ____ Your shower has a standard shower head.
- C. ____ You've replaced your standard shower head with a low-flow model.
- D. ____ You have a low-flow shower head, and you take short showers.

Washer/Dryer Appliances

- A. ____ You have a top-load clothes washer that is set for hot-water washes only.
- B. ____ You've installed a more energy-efficient front-load clothes washer.
- C. ____ You have an energy-efficient front-load clothes washer and you always set the machine for cold-water rinses.
- D. ____ Your clothes washer is the most energy-efficient front-load model in its size. You always set the machine for cold-water rinses, and most of the washes you do are full loads.

Fridge

- A. ____ You defrost the freezer compartment of your refrigerator only when it is caked with ice.
- B. ____ You check the gaskets around your refrigerator door for leakage periodically.
- C. ____ You vacuum the condenser coils in your refrigerator twice a year.
- D. ____ Your refrigerator is less than five years old and is the most energy-efficient model in its size.

Lighting

- A. ____ Once you've turned on a light, you leave it on - even in a closet, attic or basement.
- B. ____ You rarely shut lights when leaving a room.
- C. ____ You always shut lights when leaving a room.
- D. ____ You always shut lights when leaving a room, and you have compact fluorescent bulbs in the light fixtures in all your rooms.

Home Insulation

- A. ____ Your house has no insulation in the attic, walls or crawl spaces.
- B. ____ Your attic has minimal insulation (less than 3? inches).
- C. ____ Your attic has the recommended R-value of insulation for your area, and the walls are insulated.
- D. ____ Your attic, walls and crawl spaces are insulated to the U.S. Department of Energy recommendations for your area of the country.

Home Windows

- A. ____ Your house is extremely drafty because you have single-pane windows with no caulking or weather stripping.
- B. ____ You have recently caulked and weather-stripped around all the windows in your home.
- C. ____ You've recently installed storm windows.
- D. ____ You've replaced all single-pane windows in your home with double-or triple-pane "low-e"-type windows.

✓ Tally Your Home Energy Score: _____

A score of 0 - 50: There are serious leaks in your home expenses.

A score of 51 - 100: You need to mend your energy spending ways.

A score of 101 - 150: Impressive, but you can be an even more prudent homeowner.

A score of 151 - 200: Great! But some of the following tips can save even more.

Your Money-Saver Roadmap

How did you score? Whether you're an exceptional saver or a hopeless spendthrift, there are quite a few quick and easy steps you and your family can take to make your home more energy-efficient and less costly to run, while also improving the quality of your life. With a little thought and planning you can implement the following no-cost or low-cost steps and save a few thousand dollars this year. Good luck!

Energy Habits & Money-Saving Tips

Home Energy-Saving Tips	Initial Cost	Average Annual Savings
Install a comfort-zone control system on your HVAC systems. The system controls your home temperature as accurately as plus/minus 1/2°F and saves energy.	\$1,500	\$360
You can save an average of \$30 per room/per year by turning off lights when you leave a room.	\$0	\$150 +
Repair all leaky hot-water faucets for yearly hot-water energy savings.	\$0	\$100-\$200

Home Energy-Saving Tips	Initial Cost	Average Annual Savings
Install compact fluorescent bulbs. Replace a 75-watt incandescent bulb with an 18-watt fluorescent bulb - which can last years - and save.	\$16	\$15
Install timer switches on lights that you usually forget to turn off.	\$30	\$30
Keep attic vents open year-round to prevent roof and rafter rot.	\$0	Possibly \$1,000's
Caulk and weatherstrip all windows, doors and sills.	\$100	\$300
On sunny winter days open your Venetian blinds or window shades to let in the sun's heat. This can raise the temperature in your home 2°F or more, and reduce your heating bill.	\$0	\$60
On sunny summer days close your curtains, drapes and Venetian blinds to keep your home cool, thereby reducing your air-conditioning costs.	\$0	\$150
Have your home termite-inspected at least once every two years to prevent very expensive termite and carpenter-ant damage.	\$25-\$30	\$1,000's
Clean and repair your home's gutters and leaders at least twice a year to prevent costly basement and crawl-space flooding and attic leakage and damage.	\$75	\$1,000's



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