



# 16 WAYS TO GREEN YOUR HOME

## LOWER THE IMPACTS OF EVERYDAY LIVING

### Lower Your Utility Bills

#### 1. Switch to Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs

Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) can be a huge energy saver. Replace some (or all) of your incandescent bulbs with fluorescents and enjoy reductions in heat production, energy use, and electric bills!

*Savings: Changing five of the most frequently used light bulbs in your home can save you \$100 per year on electric bills!*

#### 2. Program Your Thermostat

When you are at home, keep the thermostat at 78°F or higher in the summer and 62°F or lower in the winter. Programmable thermostats allow you to program the systems to reduce output when they are not needed (e.g., when no one is home during the day, or in the evening when everyone is sleeping).

*Savings: Reduce your energy bill by \$100 per year or more!*

#### 3. Plug Air Leaks

This simple step can go a long way toward keeping your home at the temperature you desire, saving money on heating and air conditioning bills and more. Common leaks occur around windows, doors, and other wall penetrations. Plugging those leaks with weather stripping and caulk can be a simple task for anyone!

*Savings: Reduce your energy bill by \$100 per year or more!*

#### 4. Tune Up Your Heating and Cooling (HVAC) System

Have a checkup for your HVAC system every 2 years to make sure it is running efficiently. Be sure to clean the filter monthly during times of peak usage; a dirty filter can significantly reduce the efficiency of your HVAC.

*Savings: Reduce your energy bill by \$100 per year or more!*

### Choose Green Products

#### 8. Buy Local

Buying local produce reduces the amount of fossil fuels required for the transportation of products from other parts of the country or the world. It also reduces the amount of plastic and paper products consumed in the packaging of such far-traveling products. Buying local reduces consumption of valuable natural resources.

#### 5. Choose ENERGY STAR® Appliances

ENERGY STAR® qualified products meet a high level of energy efficiency, which can translate into savings on electric bills. When considering the price of a new appliance, take into account not only the purchase price, but also the long-term savings associated with an energy-efficient appliance.

*Savings: Reduce your energy bill by \$50 per appliance per year or more!*

#### 6. Reduce Water Use

- Indoor: Use less water by adding aerators (available for a few dollars at your local home supply store) to your sink faucets and changing to low-flow showerheads.
- Outdoor: Incorporate native plants in your landscape plan and minimize high-maintenance landscaping such as turf grass to conserve water, while still maintaining a beautiful lawn. *Savings: Reduce your water bill by as much as \$100 per year!*

#### 7. Switch to Green Power

Green Power is an optional utility service for customers who want to help expand the production and distribution of renewable energy technologies. With green power, you do not have to change your electricity provider. Instead, customers choose to pay a premium on their electricity bill to cover the extra cost of purchasing clean, sustainable energy. More info on green power can be found at: <http://www.eere.energy.gov/greenpower/markets/index.shtml>.

#### 9. Use Low-VOC Products

Improve your indoor air quality by switching to products that don't give off "volatile organic compounds" (VOCs). Some common low-VOC or no-VOC products include:

- Paint: A low-VOC paint is available from most major paint brands
- Cleaning products: Low-VOC cleaning alternatives are available for sale, or you can make your

own VOC-free cleaning products using simple household materials like baking soda, vinegar and borax.

## 10. Use Wood Alternatives or FSC-certified Wood Products

The type of flooring and cabinetry materials you use can have a positive effect on your health and pocket-book while reducing your environmental impacts.

- Consider using environmentally preferable and rapidly renewable products such as linoleum, bamboo, recycled-content tile or non-VOC carpet.
- Choose wood products from sustainably man-

aged forests, such as those certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

- Use locally sourced products when possible to reduce carbon emissions associated with the transportation of those products.

## 11. Use Rapidly Renewable Flooring Materials

Now there are affordable, durable, and rich-looking flooring options made from grasses and trees that mature in roughly half of the time (or less!) than it takes hardwoods to reach market size. Bamboo, cork, and eucalyptus flooring products are a sustainable alternative to traditional hardwoods.

## Green Your Yard

### 12. Plant Trees to Provide Shade and Wind Protection for Your House

This simple step can help you save money on heating and air conditioning bills while providing beautiful views around your home.

### 13. Use Native Plantings

Native plants have been growing and evolving in your area for thousands of years and, as a result, have adapted to the local soils and climate. As a result they are more likely to thrive with minimal care, unlike exotic plants. That can mean less need for water, fertilizer and pesticides. Additional info on green landscaping techniques can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/reg3esd1/garden/>.

### 14. Use Nontoxic Gardening Techniques

Many gardeners over-apply or improperly apply pesticides, putting themselves, their families, and pets at increased health risk. Nearly half of all households have pesticides stored within reach of children. About 230,000 people each year are treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries relating to various lawn and garden tools. Our clean air and drinking water are affected by pesticides and garden equipment emissions.

## Green Your Transportation

### 15. Carpool, Use Public Transportation, Walk or Bike When Possible

Environmental responsibility does not begin and end at your doorstep; green transportation means can greatly reduce your energy expenditures and carbon emissions from your daily routine.

### 16. Buy a High-efficiency Car.

See the U.S. Department of Energy's list of most fuel efficient cars at <http://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/best-worst.shtml>.



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## About the U.S. Green Building Council and LEED® for Homes

*The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is the nation's foremost coalition of leaders from every sector of the building industry working to promote buildings that are environmentally responsible, profitable and healthy places to live and work. With the help of a cadre of national experts and experienced green homebuilders, USGBC has developed LEED for Homes as a voluntary initiative to promote the transformation of the mainstream home building industry towards more sustainable practices. It provides a much-needed nationally applicable tool for homebuilders and other professionals in the residential industry for building environmentally sound, healthy, and resource-efficient places to live. For more information about LEED for Homes, visit the USGBC Web site at [www.usgbc.org/leed/homes](http://www.usgbc.org/leed/homes).*