



8 (e) Energy Efficiency

Solar photovoltaic (PV) panels

If you have solar PV panels installed, the best savings can be made by using the electricity as it's being generated. Use electric appliances such as washing machines and vacuum cleaners, and charge up devices like mobiles and lap tops during the day. Any electricity that is generated that you don't use will be exported to the national grid.

As the solar panels only generate a limited amount of electricity, try to only use one electrical appliance at a time. When you use more electricity than the solar panels can generate you will be using electricity from the national grid that you will need to pay for.

Electrical Goods

When replacing your electric cooker, fridge, freezer, fridge/freezer, washing machine, dishwasher or kettle look for the Energy Efficiency Recommended logo.

Products are rated from 'A' (most efficient) to 'G' (least efficient).

If your appliance is over 10 years old consider replacing it as it could be costing you up to £35 per year in electricity compared to an 'A' rated appliance.

The following handy tips which will reduce your energy use and cost you nothing to do:

Fridge & Freezers

- Avoid leaving fridge and freezer doors open
- Do not put hot or warm food in them
- Defrost your fridge regularly to keep it running efficiently and cheaply
- If it frosts up quickly get your door seals checked

- Don't position them next to your cooker or boiler, if it has to go here ensure that there is a good well-ventilated gap between appliances
- A freezer is more efficient when full, fill any unused voids with empty sealed containers, a chest freezer is more efficient as the cold air inside it doesn't fall out when the door is opened

Washing Machines & Dishwashers

- Wash with a full load
- Try to use a low temperature setting, reducing from a 60 to a 40-degree wash will save a third of the energy per wash

Tumble Dryers

Whenever you can, dry clothes on an outside line, this will cost you nothing

If you have to use a tumble dryer then:

- Ensure that it's vented externally or it could cause condensation
- Buy one with an electronic moisture sensor control which is most efficient or a temperature sensor control. Timer control only models are the least efficient.
- Reverse-action dryers can save energy when drying large items of fabric
- There is little difference in energy consumption between condensing tumble dryers and air vented dryers
- Don't put really wet clothes into a tumble dryer: wring out or spin-dry first
- Make sure filters are always clear of fluff
- If clothes are to be ironed remove them before they are completely dry, avoid over drying – use the moisture sensor control if available

Televisions, videos, stereos, computers, cordless and mobile phones, electric toothbrushes or anything with a neon standby light

- Products still use energy when left on standby, so avoid leaving them on this setting
- Remember not to leave appliances on charge unnecessarily
- Check any operation manuals to make sure switching off won't reset the appliance's memory

Cooking

- Choose the right size pan for cooking food, a flat pan base is preferable (the base should just cover an electric cooking ring). With gas the flame only needs to heat the bottom of the pan, and not spread up the sides
- Keep lids on pans when cooking

- Don't use more water than you need in a pan this will waste energy and could spoil the food

Kettles

- Make sure water covers the elements of your electric kettle, only heat the amount of water you need. Jug-type kettles need less water as they have smaller elements.
- If everyone in the UK did this enough energy would be saved to power every street light.

Taps

- In just one day, a dripping hot tap can waste enough water to fill a bath – make sure they're turned off

Lighting

- Remember to turn off lights when rooms are not in use
- Try to use energy saving light bulbs – especially in areas where they'll be left on for long periods of time. They can save you money as they use a quarter of the energy of a traditional light bulb to create the same amount of light, they are initially more expensive but can last up to 12 times longer - check the light bulb packaging for details. If every house in the UK had one energy saving bulb enough energy would be saved to light 2 million homes.
- If you've got outside lighting, check that it's sensor or daylight controlled or ensure it's only on when needed
- Adjust your curtains or blinds to your windows to let in the maximum amount of daylight
- If you've got street lighting report to your local Council if the lights are not working or on during daylight hours

Central heating

- You can cut your heating costs by up to 17% by controlling your heating more effectively by looking at individual room temperatures, temperature of stored hot water, and on/off times for heating and hot water, this includes switching off the boiler when heating is no longer required
- Using a low setting for a long time is cheaper and more comfortable than turning heating off and on
- Turning down your thermostat by 1 degree centigrade can cut 10% off your fuel bills

- If you're going away from home in winter leave the heating on with the thermostat on a low setting this will provide protection from freezing at a minimum cost.
- If you have an air source heat pump, the best efficiencies will be achieved by leaving your heating and hot water switched on all the time. The heat pump will only run when it is needed.
- Avoid furniture and curtains being in front of radiators or heaters
- Always close your curtains at dusk to reduce heat escaping
- Should you need a new gas or oil boiler, you could be offered a combi boiler as a replacement. You should consider this as this type of boiler only heats the water you use and therefore saves energy in not having to store hot water.
- Inform the repairs desk if your hot water cylinder is not lagged or lagging is damaged, or if insulation or lagging is missing in your roof void. This could be as a result of it not being refitted following repair work.

Water Consumption & Conservation

Many properties now have water supplied through a meter. Reducing the amounts of water you use in your home could save you money and save a valuable resource:

- Keep a check on your meter reading, a burst may not be noticed if concealed, water could be leaking away and costing you money without you being aware of it
- Always report property leaks, overflows running and dripping taps immediately to the repairs clerk, remember to turn off any valves to reduce the problem
- Report any outside bursts on the water main to United Utilities (for most Cumbrian properties) on 0800 330033 or Northumbrian Water (for properties in Alston/ Nenthead area) on 0800 393084

Below are some tips on water conservation in your home, most of them are common sense measures.

Bathroom

- If you have a shower in your home use it rather than the bath, if you haven't a fitted shower a cheaper alternative can be the flexible hose type shower fitted to the taps (Power showers can use more water than a bath)
- If you have a bath, run it at the required temperature rather than filling with over hot water then having to cool it down
- When using the hand basin, put in the plug and run sufficient water only
- When brushing your teeth use a cup or glass for the water you need
- Consider getting spray taps or inserts fitted to your wash hand basin this could reduce water wastage here by up to 70%

- If you have a dual flush cistern on your WC only use the Full flush to dispose of solids, if you have an old large cistern its capacity can be reduced by the careful insertion of a plastic bottle or bag

Kitchens

- Try not to rinse things under a running tap - use a bowl of water instead
- Use a bowl in your sink and recycle the water from it outside in your garden
- A carefully loaded dishwasher on a low-temperature cycle will typically consume less water and electricity than you'd use by washing up in the sink.

Gardens

- Fit a water butt to your external rainwater pipe and use this water for watering plants etc.
- Use a watering can in your garden rather than a hosepipe