

# Resolve to use energy wisely and reap the rewards

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**As you make your New Year's resolutions, consider the positive impact you can make on both your pocketbook and the environment by resolving to use energy more wisely.**

For a quick and simple place to start, look around your home for energy "vampires"; those appliances and electronic devices that still consume energy even when not in use. For example, if you have appliances or electronics with digital clocks or lights that remain on even in the "off" position, then you likely have energy vampires in your home and are spending money unnecessarily.

The Department of Energy asserts that vampire energy amounts to about five percent of energy consumed in the United States and usually costs consumers more than \$3 billion each year.

"Energy vampires are everywhere in your home," said Bill Eberle, Efficiency and Innovative Technology Analyst for Progress Energy Florida. "And they are using energy 24 hours a day, which can add up quickly to five percent of your monthly energy bill." For example, a Progress Energy customer in Safety Harbor had an opportunity to save over \$175 per year by managing their energy vampires.

According to E Source, a provider of independent research, advisory, and information services to utilities, energy vampires fall into three different categories.

- **Electronic controls:** Appliances or electronics that use a remote control or electronic power switch require a sensor to remain alert all the time—ready for someone to hit the "on" button.
- **Clocks and other always-on components:** Appliances or electronics that use internal clocks or other components that remain operational even in the "off" mode will consume energy. Perhaps the most obvious example is a desktop computer, which keeps a clock and sometimes a couple of additional functions operating even when it's "off."
- **Direct-current (DC) power:** Anything that relies on DC power, including a laptop charger, cordless phone, iPod charger, electric toothbrush, etc., will have a power

transformer that draws electricity all the time when left plugged in. In fact, if you leave your cell phone charger plugged into the wall, it's still consuming power even if the battery is fully charged or the phone is disconnected from the charger.

So, how do you eliminate the vampires and start saving money? The U.S. Department of Energy recommends the following steps.

1. Start by unplugging appliances directly from wall outlets when not in use. Instead of turning your electronic devices off one at a time, make the job easier by plugging all of your electronics into a power strip or two and "switch off" the power strip after you have finished using the item(s). Don't worry; this will not harm your electronics.
2. If you are not going to be using your computer for a while and don't want to shut it down, simply turn off your monitor. Screen savers do not reduce the amount of energy used.
3. If you are planning to buy a new appliance like a refrigerator or dishwasher, make sure you look for one that EnergyStar®-certified. They use less energy, sometimes half as much, to perform their normal duties. The ENERGY STAR® is a blue sticker that can be found directly on the appliance itself or the box it comes in. You can also check the yellow Energy Guide Label that shows how much energy the appliance will use and compare it with others.

To find additional ways to use energy more wisely, schedule a free Home Energy Check with one of Progress Energy Florida's energy advisors. The company offers its customers a free evaluation of your home to analyze its overall energy use and provides a customized report with specific recommendations that can help you save energy and money on your monthly power bill. For more information about a Home Energy Check, visit [savethewatts.com](http://savethewatts.com) or call 1.877.364.9003.

LOOKING AT POWER IN A NEW LIGHT

