



Going Green: Energy Efficiency

Whether it's electricity, oil, or water there are simple strategies you can employ to use these resources more efficiently. Simply put, by using less energy you are not just reducing your impact on the environment, but you are also saving money. Money not wasted resources is money saved, reinvested, or spent elsewhere on your business.

There are a number of easy no-cost or low-cost steps you can take to reduce your business' energy use and power bills. These are applicable if you're running a bed and breakfast from your home or if you are operating a large hotel. In many cases, a B&B owner can save 20 or 30 percent on its energy costs by using energy more efficiently and by making simple upgrades. As for a full-service hotel, a 10 percent reduction in energy consumption would have the same financial effect as increasing the average daily room rate by \$1.50.

Whatever the nature of your tourism operation, below are a series of energy efficiency tips that when implemented together can mean significant savings:

➤ HEATING, VENTILATION, & AIR CONDITIONING

- Set back your business' thermostats at night or when you are away.
- Avoid setting your thermostat at a warmer setting than normal in an attempt to heat a room quickly. It will not warm your space any faster and will probably result in excessive heating and, therefore, an unnecessary expense.
- Better still, install a programmable thermostat. A programmable thermostat can automate the process to ensure consistency – and provide savings of up to 15%.
- Air sealing can keep the heat in and the cold out. Caulk and weather strip around your doors and windows. Do not forget to seal holes where phone, cable and electrical wires enter.
- Be sure your workspace is properly ventilated. Unless properly ventilated, an airtight home can seal in indoor air pollutants.
- Proper ventilation also helps control moisture—another important consideration for a healthy, energy-efficient space.
- Using ventilation for cooling is the least expensive and most energy-efficient way to cool buildings.
- The use of air conditioning is becoming more common in Newfoundland and Labrador, and may be an important consideration in keeping your customers comfortable. If you are using air conditioning, be sure to set your thermostat at as

high a temperature as comfortably possible in the summer, monitor, and ensure humidity control if needed. The smaller the difference between the indoor and outdoor temperatures, the lower your overall cooling bill will be.

- Avoid setting your thermostat at a colder setting than normal when you turn on your air conditioner. It will not cool your space any faster and could result in excessive cooling and, therefore, unnecessary expense.
- Consider using an interior fan along with your window air conditioner to spread the cooled air through your space without greatly increasing your power use.

➤ LIGHTING & LIGHTING CONTROL

- Keep your lighting fixtures clean. Clean every two or three years for best performance.
- Maximize natural light and remove lamps and lights that you do not need.
- Adjust your lighting levels to match your work needs at different times of the day. Locations with natural light may not need much more additional lighting during the day. The installation of dimmer controls can help regulate lighting levels.
- Remember to turn off lights when not in use and when leaving the office.
- Replace your old inefficient incandescent lights, pot lights and general lighting fixtures with appropriate wattage energy efficient lighting. An average home has 30 light bulbs costing about \$200/yr in energy. By choosing more efficient bulbs, you can cut your energy use by 75%. For larger businesses, on average lighting accounts for 35-40% of a business's electricity use. The potential for savings are significant.
- Replace any traditional 'exit' signs with LED versions.
- By using LED wall packs for exterior lighting, you can reduce electrical consumption by 56% and achieve brighter lighting.
- Automate your lighting. Use occupancy sensors in meeting rooms, washrooms and storage areas to turn lights off automatically. Install sensors or timers on your exterior lighting.
- Energy efficient lights typically have much longer lifespans than their traditional counterparts. Savings are realized through energy, but the reduced maintenance time and costs associated with switching bulbs may be a consideration for larger businesses.

➤ OFFICE EQUIPMENT

- Shut down your computers and printers at night and when not in use.

- Computers, fax machines, TVs, CD players, alarm clocks, cable boxes, etc. all consume energy even when not in use. Unplug them when you are away for an extended period.

➤ YOUR KITCHEN

- Commercial kitchen equipment is often very demanding in its energy use, and is often in use for long periods of time. Equipment used for food preparation may account for 35% of your entire energy use.
- New equipment purchased for your kitchen should be EnergyStar qualified. The upfront costs in some cases may be higher, but the appliances can provide fast payback and subsequently significant savings over the course of its life.
- Consider the layout of your kitchen. Refrigerators placed next to broilers, steamers, and open burners have to work extra hard to maintain internal temperatures. Separate your cooling equipment from your cooking equipment.
- Ensure you have proper ventilation infrastructure in your kitchen. Excessive smoke and heat from your cooking area are making you cooling systems to work harder than they have to.



If your business activities include food preparation, the Restaurant Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (RANL) provides excellent and detailed information on energy efficiency in a restaurant setting on its website: <http://www.ranl.ca/>.

➤ DAILY TASKS AT YOUR B&B

- Ventilation fans can remove all of the heat in your space within two to three hours. Use your kitchen and bathroom fans sparingly.
- Set the dishwasher to energy or water saver mode; air dry dishes instead of heat drying.
- Set the temperature inside your refrigerator to the mid-level setting, usually 4°C.
- Buy an electric kettle with an automatic shut off. Using an element to heat a traditional kettle is very energy inefficient.
- Wash and rinse laundry in cold water.
- Clean your dryer lint trap after each load; this will help decrease drying time and reduce the risk of fire.

➤ WATER USE

- Water use consumes energy. 10% of all energy costs in a B&B environment and 5% in a hotel come from heating hot water. Reduce use where possible, e.g. install low-flow shower heads.
- Though we are fortunate in Newfoundland and Labrador to have an abundance of fresh water, the more we use the more strain we are placing on the infrastructure in our towns – which means higher costs to maintain service levels and investments in additional capacity. How can you reduce water use?
 - Regularly check all urinals and toilets for leaks and proper flush volumes.
 - Ensure all leaks are prepared in a timely manner.
 - Install low-flush toilets.
 - Ensure you are watering your property only when necessary. Brown grass does not mean dying grass; the soil moisture determines the health of your grass. Watering a mature lawn every other day, especially in our province's climate, is overwatering – and actually contributes to weed growth!

CONCLUSION



Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro and Newfoundland Power created takeCHARGE, a provincial organization which helps raise awareness of the importance of using energy wisely. Through takeCHARGE, a number of rebate programs are regularly available for businesses to acquire energy efficiency products at a lower cost. Visit the takeCHARGE website for many more energy efficiency tips and a current listing of available rebates: <http://TakeChargeNL.ca>.

BUSINESS EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

takeCHARGE can help identify and pay for energy efficiency improvements for your business. You could get up to \$50,000 back when you invest in energy saving upgrades in heating and cooling, refrigeration, lighting and controls, and more. Most importantly, these energy savings investments will continue to contribute to your bottom line through the life of the product. takeCHARGE staff are available to conduct a complimentary energy audit of your business space to help identify opportunities for efficiency. Visit the takeCHARGE website at <http://TakeChargeNL.ca/business/custom/> for more information.

