

CLIMATE CHANGE



Are YOU concerned?

SAVING ENERGY – “DOING our BIT”

We can all reduce greenhouse gas emissions by avoiding waste and reducing energy consumption. Making it a goal to adopt a lower consumption lifestyle can even be satisfying! Whether directly or from reduced power station emissions by cutting our electricity usage, the possibilities include:

One-off Actions

Insulate and draughtproof! – it is estimated that over 25% of energy is lost through badly-insulated buildings. Large grants are available for everyone for this purpose – contact a local grant-approved insulation installer or your local Energy Saving Trust office, tel 0800 512 012, www.saveenergy.co.uk

Switch to a “green” electricity account: This is one of the most effective things you can do! - calculated as 12 times more effective at reducing emissions than fitting low-energy light bulbs! Although your electricity still comes from the same grid, these companies are committed to investing in clean energy sources, therefore reducing the overall proportion of electricity generated from fossil fuels. The most effective one is considered to be “Good Energy” which buys 100% renewable energy: tel 0845 456 1640; www.good-energy.co.uk.

Stop junk mail by registering with the Mailing Preference Service: (<http://www.mpsonline.org.uk/mps>); Freepost 22, London W1E 7EZ; tel 020 7291 3310.

As with all products and services, the manufacture and distribution of junk mail consumes energy, not to mention the emission of methane (greenhouse gas) from landfill if it is thrown away.

Replace light bulbs with low-energy types (yes, you’ve probably heard it many times before, but these are now available in different shapes & sizes and their prices are much reduced).

Check the hot water thermostat setting – water need not be scalding - 60°C is the recommended satisfactory level. The higher the temperature, the more heat escapes.

Solar panel-based hot water heating systems can be installed with a grant from around £2500.

Everyday

Put on seasonal clothing and set the heating thermostat lower! This is the No.1 thing you can do to reduce energy consumption at home, apart from insulating the building. Lived-in rooms need not normally be heated beyond 18-21°C. Don’t waste energy overheating rooms not in regular use. Heating uses 84% of home energy.

Switch off televisions and computer monitors and other appliances when not in use, instead of leaving them on standby which still consumes substantial electricity. Unplug mobile phone chargers! (and similar).

Fill the kettle only to the level necessary for the number of drinks needed!

Recycle waste – food waste and paper in landfill sites give off methane, a very potent greenhouse gas. Check out the location of your council’s nearest recycling bins and separate out paper, glass, cans (tin and aluminium OK mixed), plastic bottles, cardboard.

Use air conditioning only in hot conditions when ordinary ventilation is insufficient. Air conditioning is very energy-hungry; e.g. switching it on in a car increases fuel consumption by up to 4 miles per gallon. There is a rapidly increasing use of air conditioning in buildings – it is often left switched on unnecessarily.

Keep a check on your fridge and freezer temperatures – if unnecessarily cold, they use much more electricity. The normal recommendation is 1 to 3°C for a fridge and minus 16 to 18°C for a freezer. Suitable “fridge thermometers” can be purchased cheaply at DIY/kitchen stores. De-frost regularly!

Take showers – save a bath for an occasional luxury!

Buy local food where possible – most supermarket produce involves long distance transport by road and air.

Avoid using tumble dryers and combined washer-dryers unless no alternative.

Travel lightly – compromise where possible on car and plane journeys, use trains and buses where practical, try to avoid excessive commuting distances!

Cars – drive smoothly and not too fast, don't labour the engine, keep tyres well inflated, service regularly, don't carry heavy items unnecessarily. Car share, use public transport?

Embrace electronic information – move away from surrounding yourself with paper! (back up your computer regularly).

Encourage others by example - relatives/friends/teachers/employers/contacts.

When Replacing

Some measures involve expenditure and can be phased in at suitable times:

Cars: Run a smaller car. Diesels emit 20% less carbon dioxide. “Hybrids” save fuel but are expensive to buy.

Fridges, freezers, washing machines, dishwashers: modern “A”-rated models can cut energy use by half.

LCD computer monitors: these “thin” types use much less electricity than conventional “CRT” tube types.

TVs: Buy LCD type; not plasma (the largest) – these consume more than twice as much energy!

Boilers: condensing type are the most efficient (obligatory for new boilers from 2005).

Avoid Excess

In all its forms – all products and utilities require energy for their manufacture and distribution, whether food & drink, hardware, domestic goods, paper, fuel, the water supply, etc.

More Difficult

Some of the energy-indulgent activities of our consumer society are more difficult for most of us to influence, such as over-packaging, fashion-created obsolescence, overheated offices/department stores/public buildings, excessive commercial use of vehicles and air transport, banks of TVs permanently powered up in electrical stores, hundreds of bulbs lit in lighting sales departments, etc, etc. However, we sometimes have the chance to express our concern to the appropriate management.

We should take satisfaction in the energy savings we make, in the knowledge that we are “doing our bit” to help reduce the risk of suffering due to climate extremes.

If you are interested in registering for our emailed climate change news updates, please contact us.

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