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First Steps to Saving Energy in the Office.

Energy is mainly used for heating, lighting, appliances and ventilation. Every computer, light and copier left on overnight is a few pence more on the electricity bill and a little more CO₂ in the atmosphere. It's that simple! But getting people out of bad habits and into good ones takes time, effort and positive leadership.

Find time for a discussion in the office about these issues and what you can do. A handout for staff to help a discussion on energy and climate change is available at <http://eaclink.info/?UOBWZ> and a sheet of 'Ideas for saving energy in homes and offices' is available at <http://eaclink.info/?EDAWM>.

How far you can act on these issues will depend partly on what control you have over your office. If you own it then you will be able to make bigger changes than if you lease or rent.

Building high levels of awareness about switching off appliances is a first step (that never stops!). If you have an electricity meter, start to keep a record of monthly readings so that you can show the savings that are being made.

Heating

Heating is likely to be your main energy cost. There is scope for real savings in most offices so:

- Check the thermostats. You don't need to heat an office above 19 - 21°C nor your hot water supply above 60°C. Anything higher is wasteful.
- Check timers so that heating only comes on when the office is occupied. Make sure that you're not heating the office over the weekend.
- Cut the draughts. Check the office is well insulated and draught-proofed, identify the problem spots and take action. Draught proofing foam tape for the most obvious spots is available cheaply at hardware and DIY stores.

Equipment

Turn it off when it's not being used! It's that easy. That includes computers left on at lunchtime, and printers, and everything should go off at night (unless there are really compelling reasons – "we've always left the computers on at night" is not a compelling reason!

Lighting

Use natural light wherever possible. Move desks so that people can make best use of daylight. It makes very good sense to use low-energy light-bulbs as standard. These cost a little more but given their lower energy use and much longer lives they are a good investment. If they are on for much of the day they can save up to £10 a year. There are many types available so check what's best for you at a lighting store.

Air conditioning

Many offices use more energy in July than in January due to air conditioning. Keep this under control:

- Only use air conditioning when it's really necessary.
- Keep the windows open
- Don't cool an office below 24° C.

Download and advice sheet on this for more information,
<http://eaclink.info/?DLHCZ>