

Low and No-cost Ways for Businesses to Increase their Energy Efficiency



Minnesota Chamber of Commerce
ENERGY SMART

Heating & Cooling

- **Use programmable thermostats.** Set the thermostats to turn on 30 minutes before people will be in the building and off when they will leave. In the winter, program the thermostat between 65° and 70°. Xcel Energy offers free programmable Wi-Fi thermostats as part of their Power Savers program.
- **Close exterior doors when the HVAC is on.** Don't waste heated or cooled air by leaving a door or window open. Make sure your entryway is insulated and use weatherstripping and caulking wherever it is needed.
- **Don't heat space that isn't being used.** Close the doors and vents to rooms (garages, storerooms) that are being used infrequently. The less space that needs to be heated the less energy you use.
- **Insulate and seal heating ducts.** Minimize heating loss by sealing and wrapping your ductwork with insulation. This works well in out-of-sight areas.
- **Aim the heating registers horizontally.** Hot air rises, so to keep the hot air lower longer direct the air to blow across the floor instead of straight up.
- **Maintain you HVAC.** Set up a maintenance schedule and follow it. Set up a contract with a HVAC company for simplicity. Changing filters and cleaning coils will improve air quality and reduce wear on your unit. Your HVAC unit may last years longer with regular maintenance.
- **Use the sun in the winter.** Open blinds to let in sun in the winter. Close the blinds at night to trap the heat inside.
- **Block the sun in the summer.** Close the blinds in the summer to block the heat. Plant trees around the building to provide shade.

Lighting

- **Reduce unnecessary lighting.** Make the best use of natural daylight by opening blinds. A light audit tells you if you are over-lighting an area and help decrease fixtures or dim lightbulbs.

- **Install occupancy sensors and daylight dimmers.** These tools prevent unnecessary light from being used when no-one is in the room or if there is a lot of natural light.
- **Install LED lightbulbs.** Either as a complete retrofitting project or one-by-one as light bulbs die, replace bulbs with the energy efficient LED option. Longer lifespan, less maintenance, and many color and dimming options make LED bulbs a practical choice.

Boiler and Water Heaters

- **Insulate water heater and pipes.** Prevent heat loss by wrapping pipes in insulation, focus especially on the first few feet leaving the boiler or heater.
- **Turn down the maximum water temperature in the water heater.** Setting the maximum temperature to 120° will decrease the risk of scalding, prevent mineral build-up, lower energy usage, and still be plenty hot.

Office Equipment

- **Buy ENERGY STAR equipment.** When it is time to buy new equipment, research ENERGY STAR certified products. The higher initial price will be covered over time by the cost savings in your energy bill.
- **Use “smart” power strips.** These power strips prevent energy usage by shutting down power to products that go into standby mode.