

ENERGY MATTERS

Energy-Smart Living To Defeat The Dog Days

(NAPSA)—With heat and humidity and rising energy costs, your utility bills could be even higher this year. Making your home “green” could leave more green in your pocket.

What exactly is a green home? A green home is good for you and good for the environment. It uses less water and energy than the average home, recycles more waste and avoids the use of lawn and garden chemicals. It helps keep more dollars in your pocket.

According to the Leviton Institute, there are many ways you can make your home green. A good place to start thinking green is with electrical use.

Here are 12 simple steps you can take to make your home more energy smart:

1. Make sure your HVAC system is up to date and in top operating condition. Run it on a schedule to maximize energy savings.

2. Replace frequently used incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent lightbulbs. Many CFLs aren't dimmable, so be sure you know which type you have purchased before using it with a dimmer, or simply use it with a wall switch.

3. Use Energy Star-qualified appliances and devices.

4. Install motion sensors for outdoor floodlights and occupancy sensors for indoor lights in hallways, closets, garages, etc.

5. Replace traditional light switches with modern dimmer switches that set a mood and reduce costs.

6. Install digital timers, which work like a regular switch when you turn them on but then shut power off within a set range of timed intervals, from minutes to



Use compact fluorescent bulbs, dimmers and occupancy sensors to reduce energy consumption.

hours, depending on the need.

7. Plug home electronics, such as TVs and VCRs, into power strips and turn power strips off when equipment is not in use.

8. If your air conditioner doesn't have one, use a programmable thermostat to adjust the setting warmer at night or when no one is home.

9. Avoid locating lamps and TVs near your AC thermostat. The heat from these appliances will cause the unit to run longer.

10. Install white window shades, drapes or blinds to reflect heat and close those on your home's south and west sides during the day.

11. Plant trees. Just three trees properly placed around your house can save you between \$100 and \$250 annually in cooling and heating costs.

12. Most importantly, turn lights off when leaving a room. The easiest way to conserve energy is simply to ask everyone to switch off the lights when they're not using them.