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Countdown to Cool

Is Your Small Business Ready for Summer?

Top 5 Ways to Cool Your World with ENERGY STAR®

This summer the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is helping small businesses count down ways to stay cool and comfortable while saving energy and protecting our environment. The high temperatures and humidity of the summer season demand more energy to cool the buildings where we work, shop, and play. For small businesses that can be a strain on finances as well as a strain on the environment. A few simple steps to curb energy use, like turning off lights when not in use and scheduling maintenance checkups for cooling systems, will set small businesses on an important path to savings and help reduce the risks of global warming.

Countdown to a cooler planet and a more energy-efficient small business with the following tips from EPA:

5. Turn off lights and equipment when not in use and use ENERGY STAR qualified CFLs wherever appropriate.

High utility costs are often a result of paying for energy that is completely wasted by lights left on for long periods while not in use. Replace incandescent light bulbs with [ENERGY STAR qualified compact fluorescent light bulbs \(CFLs\)](#) wherever appropriate. CFLs use 75% less energy than standard incandescent bulbs to provide the same amount of light, last up to 10 times longer, and generate less heat than conventional light bulbs.

4. Use fans to reduce the need for air conditioning.

*ENERGY STAR qualified ceiling fans can cut energy use -- circulating air can make a somewhat higher temperature and/or humidity feel more comfortable. In fact a temperature setting of only 3 to 5 degrees higher can feel just as comfortable when fans are used. So turn the thermostat up several degrees while using the fans to deliver the extra cooling comfort. A ceiling fan cools **you** – not the room – so remember to turn the fan off when you leave the room. Each degree of higher temperature can save about 3% on cooling costs. When the temperature outside is more comfortable than inside, a “box fan” in the window or large building fan in the attic can push air out of the building and pull in comfortable outside air.*

3. Install an ENERGY STAR qualified programmable thermostat.

Install an [ENERGY STAR qualified programmable thermostat](#) to automate your air-conditioning (HVAC) system and save energy while your small business is closed or unoccupied. This solid-state, electronic device automatically adjusts temperature settings based on your schedule, and can be “overridden” as needed for unscheduled events. This “smart thermostat” can turn on the HVAC one hour before arrival and keep it off or at a higher, more energy-efficient temperature on weekends instead of heating or cooling unoccupied space.

2. Schedule annual, pre-season maintenance checkups with a licensed contractor to ensure your cooling system is operating efficiently and safely.

“Tune-up” your heating, ventilating, and HVAC system with an annual maintenance contract. Even better, have your HVAC serviced prior to both heating and cooling seasons. A new [ENERGY STAR qualified HVAC system](#), like a new car, will decline in performance without regular maintenance. A contract automatically ensures that your HVAC contractor will provide pre-season tune-ups before each cooling and heating season. You save energy and money, and your system may last years longer with reasonably priced yearly maintenance fees. Your chances of an emergency HVAC break-down also become very remote with regular maintenance. Change (or clean if reusable) HVAC filters every month during peak cooling or heating season.

1. Use ENERGY STAR qualified products.

[ENERGY STAR qualified products](#) are a good business investment. Products that display the ENERGY STAR label operate more efficiently, save energy, and help protect the environment. Next time you purchase a computer, printer, copier, refrigerator, television, window air-conditioning unit, or other appliance your small business may need – look for the ENERGY STAR.

To learn more about how small businesses can help protect the environment and the Small Business Network, please visit www.energystar.gov/smallbiz.