

Sunday, 8 June 2008

## **Bad habits with appliances cost NSW households \$300 million a year**

Bad habits with household appliances could be adding \$300 million to NSW electricity bills each year and pushing up greenhouse gas emissions by 2.5 million tonnes, new EnergyAustralia research has found.

EnergyAustralia surveyed 500 people across Sydney, the Central Coast and the Hunter, asking them about their domestic routines and appliance use to help determine the level of energy efficiency in households.

Running the dishwasher before it is full, leaving the old second fridge plugged in, and leaving computers on when not in use are some of the ways families are wasting energy, the survey found.

"Our bad habits in the home are literally costing the Earth," EnergyAustralia's energy efficiency expert Paul Myers said.

"Our domestic routines are collectively adding around 2.5 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere every year in NSW alone – that's the equivalent of putting an extra 500,000 cars on the road every 12 months.

"Bad habits with appliances waste energy and waste money and like most bad habits, they should be broken.

"The good news is that changing your family's domestic routine is free, easy and doesn't affect your lifestyle."

EnergyAustralia's research showed that:

- 87% of households rinse their dishes before putting them in the dishwasher - 39% always rinse them and another 48% sometimes rinse them. Of these 44% rinse them in hot water.
- More than a quarter of all households (28%) run the dishwasher before it is full.
- 22% of all people surveyed leave the fridge door open to unload shopping.
- People under 30 are more likely to leave the fridge door open while they make a sandwich or breakfast (28%) compared to 7% of people aged over 60.
- 82% of households with air conditioners are over heating their homes in winter by setting the thermostat too high (the recommended temperature is between 18 - 21°C in winter).
- 48% of people have not applied energy saving settings to their home computer.
- 65% of households turn off their television with the remote rather than at the switch.
- 29% of households have a second fridge plugged in that is rarely used

"This survey shows that families can easily become more energy efficient by making small changes to their behaviour – such as scraping plates rather than rinsing them in hot water before stacking the dishwasher," Mr Myers said.

"By using appliances efficiently the average household can save up to \$120 a year on their electricity bill and cut their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by almost one tonne.

"For example a one degree increase in temperature can increase your heating costs by up to 10 percent so it is important not to overheat your home."

Mr Myers said the research also showed that most people had taken positive steps to use less energy, particularly by taking shorter showers (75% of people) and installing low flow shower heads (66%).

“Electric hot water is one of the most greenhouse intensive ways to heat water. On average, it makes up about one third of our energy costs – so it makes sense to tackle this area in the home first.”

“Another potentially big energy user is the old second fridge as it runs all the time. If it is only needed for a few weeks a year, then a significant amount of money could be saved by switching it off for the remainder of the year (remember to leave the door slightly open).”

To help remind people to be energy efficient, EnergyAustralia is giving away 280,000 sheets of reusable stickers featuring energy saving tips to place around the home.

“This research shows that simple actions make a difference,” Mr Myors said.

“We want to help families make small improvements to their domestic habits, to help make big improvements to household bills and the environment.”

(Research findings attached)

**Media contact: EnergyAustralia News Pager 02 9966 7985.**

# Household Habits Research



## Key Findings

### Computers and Printers

- 28% of people always leave their computer on when not in use and 46% of people sometimes leave it on
- Only 25% of people never leave the computer on when not in use
- 48% of people have not applied energy saving settings to their computer
  - 59% of women have not applied the settings compared to 45% of men
  - 60% of people under 30 have not applied them vs 40% of people 60+
- 31% of people leave printers switched on

### Lights

- 26% (more than a quarter) of people leave lights on for the whole evening before going to bed rather than switch them off when they leave the room (36% of low income earners under \$30k compared to 23% of higher income earners \$71k+)
- 70% of people still have at least one traditional incandescent globe in their living room, 65% of them are in the kitchen, 77% in the main bedroom, and 51% in the family room
- 26% (more than a quarter) of all households have three or more inefficient light bulbs in their living room

### Showers

- 75% of people believe they have cut their shower length
  - 61% of under 30s have cut their shower length and 81% over 50s.
  - 81% of low income earners (up to \$30k) & 67% of people earning \$70k+
- 72% of people have genuinely made an effort to limit their shower length over the past year
  - 63% of under 30s and 78% of over 60s
  - women have tried harder than men 76% of women vs 68% of men
- 66% of people have installed a low-flow showerhead (low income people more likely 69% vs 57% higher income households)

### Hanging clothes out to dry when the sun shines

- 68% of people always hang their washing out to dry
- Younger people are less likely to hang their washing out (59% always do compared to 77% for over 60yo)
- 73% of people have a clothes dryer but 60% only use it when raining
- 18% of people use the dryer for every or most washes
- 29% of under 30s mostly use the dryer compared to 9% for people aged 60+
- Lower income people are more likely to use the dryer. 19% of households with an income less than \$31k use it for every wash compared to 9% for higher income earners (\$70k+).

## Energy Saving Tips

1. **Don't leave appliances in standby mode** - save up to \$50 a year and 0.4 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.
2. **Use energy efficient light bulbs** - save up to \$50 per year and 0.4 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.
3. **Don't over heat or over cool rooms** - save around \$50 per year and 0.4 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.
4. **Use the line whenever the sun shines** - save up to \$40 per year and 0.3 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.
5. **Get rid of or turn off that old second fridge** - save up to \$200 per year and more than 1 tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>.
6. **Shave two minutes off your shower** – save up to \$100 per year and 0.8 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.
7. **Install a triple star showerhead** – save up to \$100 a year on energy and water costs, and up to 0.8 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.
8. **Buy appliances with high star ratings** – you will save on running costs and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
9. **Wash clothes in cold water** - save around \$40 per year and 0.3 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.
10. **Don't run your pool pump for too long** - save up to \$75 per year and 0.6 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.



For more information on energy efficiency visit our website at [www.energy.com.au](http://www.energy.com.au) or call 13 15 35.  
Media enquiries 02 9966 7985.

## Household Habits Research Findings (continued)

### Washing clothes in cold water

- 23% of people mostly wash in hot water (14% of people under 40yo; 24% of people over 60 yea

### Heating and Cooling

- 57% of people had air conditioning
- 87% of people are cooling their homes to below the recommended range in summer (recommended is 23-26°C)
- 82% of people are over heating their homes in winter (recommended range is 18-21°C)

### Turning off the television at the wall

- 65% of people use the remote to turn off their TV rather than the button on the TV or the power point (57% of low income earners under \$30k vs 70% of higher income earners \$70k+)

### Keep the fridge door closed

- 37% of people say they have to remind others to close the fridge door (47% of 40-49 yo)
- 86% of people generally think about what they want from the fridge before opening the door
- Under 30s are more likely to keep the fridge door open while making a sandwich or breakfast (28%) vs 7% of people 60+
- 22% of people keep the fridge door open while they unload shopping (36% of under 30s and 10% of over 60s)

### Spare Fridges

- 29% of people have a fridge plugged in but is rarely used

### Dishwasher

- 52% of people have a dishwasher
- 87% of households rinse their dishes before putting them in the dishwasher
  - 39% of people always rinse them
  - 48% of people sometimes rinse them
- 44% of people use hot water rather than cold to rinse dishes
- More than a quarter of households (28%) run the dishwasher before it is full.

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