

Getting Started at Your Workplace

It is time to take charge. If you are like most people, work feels like a second home but are you as considerate about energy use when at the office? If every employee took simple steps to save energy, the savings would really add up.

Keep it Bright

Bust out the duster.

Say bye, bye to the dust bunnies. A thin layer of dust will reduce your bulb's brightness, forcing you to turn on additional lights to get the same effect. Adding a fresh coat of paint in a light color can also brighten up the workplace.

Instead of just swapping out your bulbs, consider investing in new lighting fixtures. Incandescent and fluorescent lamps can lose up to 30 percent of their output overtime.

Retune HVAC system

Check it out.

Most Alaska workplace buildings have outdated HVAC (Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning) systems. Modernizing your system with digital controls, an Energy Management System, and more efficient fans, motors, and controls can cut your energy bills by about \$200 a year.

Whether it's old or new, keeping your HVAC system in tip-top shape will save you in the long run. Have a contractor come in annually to perform tasks like lubricating moving parts, checking the thermostat and pressure, and inspecting the controls.

Get a Commercial Audit

Savings you can see.

What would you buy the office if you were saving thousands of bucks a month? Stop dreaming and make it happen. After businesses make the changes recommended after an energy audit, the average company saves up to 30 percent a year.

Unplug

Don't give it juice if it's not in use.

Don't let empty cubicles waste money. Be sure to unplug any computers, printers and lamps that are not being used.

Print Double-Sided

Double your savings.

Printing double-sided not only saves energy, it will save you money and paper.

Put Coffee on a Timer

Even one cup a day will cost you.

Need a good cup of coffee kick to start your day? Reboot your afternoon? That cup comes at a cost, in some areas of our state it can cost up to \$50 a year to power a coffee maker all day. To save energy, put the pot on a timer that will turn it off, instead of keeping the internal hot water tank on. You can also keep your java hot for hours by using a thermos.

Use the Right Lighting

Don't be in the dark.

Lighting costs are a huge burden at many companies but there are plenty of ways to keep the lights on without wasting energy. Taking advantage of natural light is an easy way to save money. Day-lighting controls adjust the light inside, depending on how much is coming in from outside. Installing occupancy sensors in places like hallways and bathrooms make sure the lights aren't left on.

Watt are you using?

Old, 40-watt T-12 fluorescent lamps should be replaced with 32-watt T-8 or T-5 lamps and electronic ballasts. The "T" stands for tubular, the shape of the lamp. This switch can save your business 35 to 50 percent in electricity costs.

T-12 fluorescent lamps can be identified by their 1.5 inch diameter and are one of the most common but least efficient fluorescent systems. Efficient fluorescent light ballasts are required to ensure your light fixtures work properly. Ballasts for fluorescent lighting provide the initial electricity that creates the light, and then regulates the flow of electricity through the bulb.

Power Down

Wasting money and energy is a turn off.

Phantom power will suck the energy right out of the office, even stand by mode and screen savers waste money. Make it a part of your routine to shut down your computer every night before heading home. If you have a bunch of office equipment at your desk, get a power strip and flip it off every night.

Sharing printers and avoiding letting them sit idle will also boost efficiency in your building.

Develop a Workplace Policy

Work together.

Most things are more fun when you do them as a group. To encourage increased energy awareness and savings, develop a workplace energy policy. Ask employees to work together to power down computers, print double-sided and turn off lights.

Set Goals

Hit the mark.

Who doesn't love a little bit of friendly office competition? Whether you're encouraging competition between floors or challenging the whole office to make a dent in the energy bill, setting a goal can make a big difference. Pick a goal that you can reach and make sure everybody knows about it. When you hit the mark, make it known and consider rewarding the office for all their hard work.

Invest in Savings

Go big.

Big promotions don't come easy, it takes hard work and significant investment but it's worth it in the end when you snag that corner office. Think of saving energy the same way, you can coast by or you can work your way up. While swapping out light bulbs and turning off computers makes a dent, you won't make it to the next level without taking extra steps. Investing in improvements like day-lighting systems, insulation and technology that turns off electronics comes with an initial cost, but the end result will make it worth it.