



Reduce Phantom Loads

Notes for Organizers

Standby power, also called **vampire power**, **vampire draw**, **phantom load**, or **leaking electricity**, refers to the **electric power** consumed by electronic appliances while they are switched off or in a **standby mode**. A very common "electricity vampire" is a **power adapter** which has no power-off switch. Some such devices offer **remote controls** and **digital clock** features to the user, while other devices, such as power adapters for laptop computers and other electronic devices, consume power without offering any features.

From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standby_power

A **Kill-a-Watt** is a tool that can be used to find out how much electricity a device uses. Consider purchasing one or more for your community members to sign out and borrow to find out where their electricity is going, make comparisons among appliances, and so on.

How to use a Kill-a-Watt:

1. Plug your appliance into the Kill-a-Watt, and plug that into the outlet. Note the time.
2. Check the Kill-a-Watt after 1 hour to see how much electricity the appliance has used. If your appliance is something that is turned on all the time (like a refrigerator or freezer) multiply that by 24 to see how much it consumes over the course of a day. Multiply that number by 365 to estimate the annual energy consumption. (You can also measure its electricity use over different time periods, such as 2, 6, or 24 hours, if you feel that would give a more accurate read.)
3. Check online to see how your appliance compares with Energy Star models, if applicable. If replacement is not an option, consider how to minimize use of the appliance and maximize its efficiency.

Suggested items to test:

- Refrigerator, freezer, dehumidifier: would you save significantly by replacing with an Energy Star appliance?
- Computer: Compare a laptop and a desktop, or a flat screen with a CRT monitor. How much could you save by turning each off when not in use?
- Christmas lights: compare traditional incandescent strands with LED strands
- Washing machine: Gain incentive to reduce loads by filling it completely!
- Dryer: Gain incentive to air-dry your laundry!
- Space heater, television: See where your energy is going!