

Could you reduce your energy use by 10% during Lent?

Yukoners use energy to heat their homes and run the many electrical appliances that make our modern life convenient. According to the Yukon Government's "Our Clean Future", of Yukon's total greenhouse gas emissions, 21% of GHGs come from heating our homes and buildings with fossil fuels such as oil and propane and 3% of GHGs come from electricity generation. Together these uses are responsible for almost ¼ of our Yukon GHGs.

While it is true that historically most of Yukon's electricity has come from renewable hydropower, it does not meet all of our electricity needs. In the last 12 months there were ten months when thermal energy (diesel and LNG) were burned to generate electricity and only two months when hydropower met all of our needs. Because Yukon Energy prefers hydro generation over thermal, most of the electricity we can conserve each year will translate into a reduction in the burning of thermal fuels and consequently, a reduction in GHGs.

So, what changes can you make?

We're challenging you to see if you can reduce your energy use by 10% this Lent. By taking measures at the beginning of Lent, during Lent and afterwards, could you make a noticeable difference to your energy use?

Things will change during Lent – the days will get longer and lighter, and the weather will get warmer. This might affect your energy intake too. If you've got readings from this time last year, they could be a great way to compare how much you're using. Your 2019 electricity readings are available from ATCO if you ask for them. Your fuel supplier may also provide you with last year's purchase volumes. If you don't want to do that, this is still a great opportunity to think carefully about the energy you consume, and get into good habits to help you live lightly.

Remember, saving energy also saves you money!

Here are some changes you could make around your house in order to save energy in your home:

1. **Turn down the thermostat**—Warm the person, not the space. So put on your sweater and grab your slippers. For convenience, you may want to use a programmable thermostat that turns down the thermostat when you are sleeping or at work—or at church.
2. **Eliminate vampire power by unplugging idle electronics**—Devices such as TVs, microwaves and printers use standby power even when they're switched off, but still

plugged into a socket. If it has a light, a clock or is warm, you know that it is using energy.

3. **Optimize your Hot Water Heater**—your HWH represents 15-30% of your home energy costs. So set the temperature appropriately for your needs (54C optimal) and wrap your tank with a HWH blanket and save 14% on your water heating bill.
4. **Turn off lights**—Be extra careful to switch the lights off once you leave a room and wherever possible try to maximize your use of natural light sources during the day.
5. **Replace your lightbulbs** for a more energy efficient alternative—LED bulbs are the most energy efficient option, using 75% less electricity than incandescent lightbulbs.
6. **Use a power strip** to reduce your plug load—Flipping the switch on a power strip has the same effect as unplugging each socket from the wall, preventing phantom energy loss.
7. **Turn down the temperature on your washing machine**—heating the water uses the majority of the electricity, so by doing a cold wash instead of a hot wash you can significantly reduce your energy use.
8. **Hang your clothes to dry** outside or inside on a clothes rack instead of using an electric dryer!
9. **Only run a full dishwasher**—if your dishwasher is energy efficient this will actually also use less hot water than washing up by hand in the sink! And if it is programmable, run it at night—off peak hours.
10. **Consider investing in energy efficient appliances**—when shopping for new appliances, try looking for ones which are listed as energy efficient. Energy Star appliances in particular are certified and they use 10-50% less energy and water than appliances that aren't certified. These appliances may cost more in the short-term, but in the long-term save you money in the form of cheaper energy bills! You may also qualify for a rebate from the YG Energy Solutions Centre.
11. **Finally, sign up for Peak Smart**—if you have electric heating or an electric hot water tank, you can sign up for Peak Smart, a free pilot program being offered by ATCO and Yukon Energy to shift demand away from times of peak energy use (cold, dark mornings and evenings) and reduce GHG emissions. They will use technology to reduce your demand and let you monitor your own energy use. <https://yukonenergy.ca/customer-service/saving-energy/peak-smart/>

Adapted by Rod Snow from Living Lent – creating a climate for change

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