

Put a stake in ‘vampire’ loads

Surprise—your TV uses electricity even when turned off. Same goes for many other appliances. Even chargers for cell phones can siphon energy when plugged in—even if they’re not charging a thing!

A “phantom load” is any appliance or electronic gizmo that uses energy even when turned off. Some people call them “vampire appliances” or “energy vampires.”

If your home is typical, you live with 20 vampires. They add about \$200 to your annual energy bill,



according to Cornell University. That’s because the “off” button doesn’t really mean “off” these

days; instead, it means “standby.” In fact, your TV with remote control likely uses more energy during the 20 hours a day that it’s turned off and in a “standby power” state than it does during the hours you watch the tube.

‘Vampires’ are typically appliances with remote controls, such as TVs, VCRs and audio equipment. They feature a continuous digital display—like those glowing clocks on stoves. They feature rechargeable batteries, such as cordless phones (which use energy even after the battery is charged). And they’re appliances with external power supplies, such as inkjet printers and iPod chargers.

How can you combat vampires?

- Kill vampires by using a power strip. First, plug all components of a computer or home entertainment system into a power strip. Second, turn off the power strip with a single switch. Anything plugged into the strip now is truly turned off.
- Unplug “vampires.” Unplug rarely used appliances. Ditto for chargers that aren’t in use.
- Buy energy-efficient appliances bearing the Energy Star label. That way, at least your vampires will suck away less energy. Find a list of products at EnergyStar.gov.

Be careful when clearing snow

The East Grand Forks Water and Light would like to ask customers to please be careful when clearing snow near electrical boxes and fire hydrants and please try to keep them clear by not piling snow on top of them.



Those plowing with trucks or heavy equipment should be mindful of the location of electrical boxes and fire hydrants to avoid damage, as a damaged electrical box could cause a power outage.

East Grand Forks Water & Light

YOUR HOMETOWN UTILITY SINCE 1909

The Connector

East Grand Forks Water & Light

Automatic payment convenience benefits customers and utility

Many people send us their bill payments through the mail. But we also offer our customers other payment options.

We offer automatic withdrawal and it works like this: With your permission, we notify the bank of what you owe us monthly. The bank will withdraw that amount out of your account.

You receive your regular bill so you have a payment and usage record. Please come into our office to set this up.

If it is convenient, you can also drop by our office in city hall to pay your bill, or drop it into one of three drop boxes: at city hall, at the East Grand Forks Hugo’s or at the Senior Center parking lot.

Our office accepts credit card payments with VISA and MASTERCARD and you can also go online to www.waterandlight.info and click on Make A Payment to make your payments online.

Working together on conservation

The East Grand Forks Water and Light Energy Conservation Programs aim to save you energy and money.

There are two main paths of the programs. The first offers incentives to offset the upfront cost for customers installing select energy efficient appliances, lighting, and weatherization. The second increases awareness of how

to conserve energy at home through lifestyle choices.

Both efficiency and conservation put the

power in the customer's hands to save money on energy expenses.

The Water and Light & its power supplier benefit because it helps delay the need for new generation through the reduction of electrical demand. Customers benefit because saving energy helps insulate them from rising wholesale power costs.

The Energy Conservation programs comply with Minnesota law requiring utilities to reduce energy sales by 1.5 percent each year. For more information on all Energy Conservation offerings and how you can benefit, please call the business office at 773-1163 or visit us online at www.waterandlight.info.



We offer home energy audits

The East Grand Forks Water and Light now offers subsidized Home Energy Audits to those interested in identifying what measures may be taken to make their home more energy efficient.

The audit will show the homeowner problems that may, when corrected, save you, the customer, significant amounts of money over time.



We will send a Certified Home Energy Auditor to your home that will use a variety of techniques and equipment to determine your energy efficiency level. In addition to doing an evaluation of your home, the auditor will perform a blower door test that measures the extent of leaks in the building envelope and an infrared scan, if you choose.

A standard Energy Audit including a blower door test costs \$200. Since we believe this audit to be of great value to our customers the Water and Light will pay half of this cost for you so the audit **will cost you only \$100**. An audit adding an infrared scan cost \$300, but as a customer of the Water and Light you **will only pay \$150**.

Please call Bonnie @ 218-773-1163 or e-mail her at babel@egf.mn if you have questions or would like to request an audit.

Why does electric use often increase in the winter months?

Typically, many people in our area use more electricity during the winter months due to a number of factors. These factors include:

- Heating systems are running more. Even if you don't have an electric furnace, your use can increase because electricity powers the blower motor in the furnace.
- Portable electric space heaters are used.
- Short days and long nights mean families are inside more using lights, appliances, TV, etc.
- Ovens and stoves are used more, since we are not as likely to grill outside.
- Car block heaters are being plugged in.

Need help paying utility bill?

Tri-Valley Opportunity Council has a program known as fuel assistance that helps income-eligible households with their home energy bills. Households are served based on such factors as household size, income, and heating history. For more information about this program, call Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, toll free 1-866-264-3729.