

Office energy efficiency

Tips for office tenants

As an office tenant you may think that there is little you can do to reduce carbon pollution - but there are many simple and low cost ways you can improve your greenhouse performance and reduce the cost of your energy bills at the same time.

You have the opportunity to reduce the energy used by the lighting, computers and office equipment around you, as well as via supplementary air conditioning, kitchen equipment and hot water.

LIGHTING

Lighting can contribute between 30% and 65%¹ to energy use in office tenancies depending on the design of the premise, office layout and the types of light fittings and control systems. You can reduce your energy bills by reducing the amount of time your lights are left on and improving the efficiency of your lighting system.

- Make sure lights are turned off when not in use.
- If you employ cleaners or security staff, ensure their contract requires that they switch lights off after their work is finished.
- Reduce your lighting energy costs by 30% to 80% by replacing your old lights with more energy efficient models and changing your lighting controls. Install daylight sensors, timers or movement sensors to control lighting, especially in areas which are not always occupied, such as meeting rooms, storage areas or restrooms. Consult a lighting designer who can help you balance lighting needs with energy efficiency.
- Reduce the overall number of lights within Australian Standard parameters. Many office spaces are over-lit and this can cause discomfort and strain for occupants. Consult a lighting designer to check your lighting levels.

COMPUTERS AND OFFICE EQUIPMENT

Computers and office equipment such as printers, photocopiers and fax machines can typically contribute between 30% and 55%¹ to tenancy energy use. Choosing the right office equipment will have a significant impact on the energy use of your office.

- Consider laptops instead of desktop computers. Typically, laptops can use as much as 85% less energy than desktops with CRT monitors.
- Consider upgrading to LCD monitors. CRT monitors can consume close to twice as much power as LCD monitors.
- Ensure your computers and office equipment are ENERGY STAR enabled so that they 'go to sleep' and use less energy when not being used.
- Reducing the brightness of your screen display can also help to reduce energy usage.
- Instruct all staff to turn off computers and office equipment at the end of the day. How people use equipment can have as much impact on energy consumption as the type of equipment used. Remember to switch off the monitors too.

KITCHEN EQUIPMENT

You can reduce energy use in kitchens with some simple purchasing decisions.

- Always check the energy rating label on white goods such as fridges and dishwashers. More stars means better energy efficiency and cheaper running costs.

¹ Based on a sample of 19 commercial office tenancies in a 2006 study commissioned by the Department of Energy, Utilities and Sustainability (DEUS) on tenancy energy use.

- Use rapid boil kettles instead of boiling water units. Boiling water units such as ZIP boiler are on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week just to keep your water hot – that’s a lot of wasted energy. Boiling a kettle only takes a couple of minutes and saves you money. Alternatively, ensure the ZIP boiler has a timer device to enable out-of-hours switch off.

HOT WATER

- Turn the hot water system off when it is not needed for extended periods of time. This will result in less hot water used.
- Fix dripping water taps – they waste water and energy (if it is a hot tap).

SUPPLEMENTARY AIRCONDITIONING

Supplementary air conditioning units can be very energy intensive. The key to saving energy lies in sizing, installing, maintaining and running the system correctly.

- Make sure that you buy a system that is appropriate for your needs in terms of size and usage.
- Ensure thermostats are well located and are not placed near heat sources such as photocopiers and kettles or in sunlight or cupboards.
- Keep filters clean and replace them when needed.
- Check the settings for on/off times to avoid the unit running unnecessarily. Set auto off timing to be short, at about 30 minutes.
- Set thermostats to be slightly higher than normal office temperatures, so that the system only operates when needed.
- Put up a sign saying that it is not worth running air conditioning for short periods, so do not turn on in meeting rooms for short meetings.
- Make sure that the pipes and ducts are insulated to avoid heat and cooling losses.
- Ensure maintenance programs include regular checks of thermostat calibration, sensors and controllers to ensure they are operating correctly.

BENCHMARK THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF YOUR TENANCY

Rate your tenancy as part of your energy management plan to understand, improve and communicate your energy efficiency performance.

NABERS Energy for Offices rates a tenancy against a set of benchmarks to provide an accurate, comparable measure of its environmental performance, improving industry and public understanding of its impact. NABERS is the only environmental rating tool that provides a reliable benchmark of the actual environmental performance of a building compared to other Australian buildings.



You can use NABERS Energy for Offices to:

- Understand and compare your energy efficiency performance
- Report and promote your commitment to the environment
- Identify cost savings within your tenancy
- Track your improvements over time.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more ways to make your office energy efficient, obtain a copy of the Green Lease Guide or contact your CitySwitch Program Manager visit cityswitch.net.au. For information about NABERS visit www.nabers.com.au.

This fact sheet has been developed in collaboration between the NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water and CitySwitch Green Office.