

## Top Five Energy-Saving Tips for Retail

Interested in boosting your bottom line and simultaneously improving the shopping atmosphere of your store? The following energy-saving tips can help you save significant amounts of energy while maintaining or improving customer comfort, potentially leading to increased sales as well as a “greener” image.

**Turn things off.** According to the U.S. Department of Energy, lighting accounts for more than 50 percent of all electricity consumption in retail buildings, so it’s a great idea to turn lights off when they are not in use. When properly installed, occupancy sensors and timers can help to achieve this. A no-cost option is to simply train staff to include turning off lights as part of store-closing procedures. In addition to lighting, many retail stores have electronic displays that are left on even when the store is closed. At the end of the day, these displays can be shut off manually or with simple timers.

**Change HVAC settings.** HVAC is one of the biggest sources of energy consumption in retail buildings. During closed hours, turn temperature settings down in heating seasons and up in cooling seasons. You can automate these settings with programmable thermostats. Additionally, make sure that HVAC settings in stockrooms, offices, and other peripheral spaces are at minimum settings.

**Maintain your HVAC system.** Making sure that your HVAC system is regularly cleaned and serviced can help to prevent costly heating and cooling bills. Two simple ways to improve the efficiency of your system are to change your filters regularly and to check your condenser coils for any debris that they may have collected. If your system uses an economizer, have a licensed technician check, clean, calibrate, and lubricate it about once a year, as economizer failure can increase heating and cooling costs by up to 50 percent.

**Improve your lighting.** Proper display lighting is critical for boosting retail sales and preventing merchandise returns. Quartz halogen lamps are energy-intensive but are commonly used for accenting merchandise because they provide a bright, focused column of light. Efficient alternatives to consider are compact fluorescent or metal halide track or spot lights. Have a lighting consultant review your lighting layout to ensure that it provides the appropriate light levels, quality of light, color rendering, color uniformity, and energy performance.

Don’t forget about T12 fluorescent lamps—relamping with modern T8 lamps and electronic ballasts can reduce your lighting energy consumption by 35 percent. Adding specular reflectors, new lenses, and occupancy sensors can double the savings and yield shorter payback periods.

Most parking lots are designed with far more lighting than is actually necessary. When designing lighting for a new parking lot, instead of high-pressure sodium lamps, consider using low-wattage metal halide lamps in fixtures that direct the light downward. These put out more light in the blue part of the spectrum, making it easier to see under low-light conditions. Even with the lower wattage, a retail store can safely use fewer lamps if this choice is made.

**Commission your building.** Commissioning is a process in which engineers systematically check and tune up building systems to ensure that they are operating appropriately and efficiently. Studies have shown that commissioning a building’s energy systems can lead to reductions of around 16 percent in annual energy bills. In addition to providing energy savings, commissioning often increases comfort for occupants because the majority of problems identified tend to concern HVAC systems. If your building was previously commissioned, consider investing in recommissioning every three to five years.

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## Need more help?

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Financial incentives for selected energy efficiency improvements are available from Focus on Energy, Wisconsin's statewide program for energy efficiency and renewable energy. See [focusonenergy.com/incentives](http://focusonenergy.com/incentives) for more details.

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