



# Can you identify the Phantom Energy Users?



## Phantom Energy Users

Phantom or standby energy users are electric appliances or electronics that require electricity even when you aren't actively using them. They don't use much power individually, but when you add them up, they can significantly impact your monthly energy use. One MGE employee calculated his household impact at over \$11 per month.

1. Garage door opener—Any equipment that operates with a remote control is using power all the time.
2. Some thermostats use power beyond the batteries most have for backing up your settings.
3. This oven, or any appliance with a digital clock, is using power all the time. This unit can also be programmed to start baking or self-cleaning at a later time—that uses power. Other examples of standby or delayed start users are dishwashers and water softeners.
4. Programmable coffee maker—If it has a clock and you can set it to start later, it's using power.
5. Doorbell—Yup, it's "on"!
6. How many battery chargers are in your house and workshop? If they are plugged in, they are using power, like this one for a portable drill/driver.
7. This cell phone charger is technically "on" because it's charging the phone. If you leave the black square plugged in, even when not connected to the phone, it will be using power.
8. Whole house vacuum system—It's shut off, but ready for use (see the green light?) the instant you plug the hose into a system outlet.
9. Laptop computer power converter—If it's plugged into the wall it's using energy, even if not plugged into the computer.
10. Not only the TV, but also the VCR, DVD and the cable box are all drawing power, even when switched "off."
11. This iron is turned off, but notice the red light is on. It's still using power.
12. Portable telephone cradle—It's using power whether the phone is on or off the cradle.
13. Timers use energy, yet if they are controlling other bigger energy users, they can be energy savers!

**Answer:** *All photos show at least one standby or phantom energy user.*

### Other phantom or standby users

Baby monitor

"Glade" or other plug-in air freshener

Answering machine

Lighted dimmer switches

Alarm clock

Clock/radio

### What can you do?

For some users, nothing. But some things can be unplugged or plugged in to an outlet bar and easily switched off when you don't need them to be on.

### To learn more

If you are a patron of a public library in MGE's service area, you can borrow a portable energy meter from your local library. Take it home and measure your own phantom users. MGE has supplied over 100 portable energy meters to libraries in our service area to help our customers find more ways to save on their energy bills.