

Energy-saving tips for businesses

How you select and manage the use of heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning (HVAC) units and lighting systems has a significant impact on your costs, the need for new power plants, and the emissions from power plants. The list below offers savings options for your business and the environment.

HVAC:

- **HVAC Units:** Replace rooftop and packaged heating and cooling units with high-efficiency models. They are readily available and can reduce operating costs by 15% to 30% over units that just meet Wisconsin code requirements.
- **Programmable Thermostats:** Ensure the building's HVAC equipment is equipped with a commercial-grade thermostat. Verify your thermostat is programmed correctly including an occupied and unoccupied cycle. Set back the temperature by 10 degrees during the unoccupied cycle to reduce your annual heating bill by approximately 10%.
- **Economizers:** Review the performance of the economizers on your HVAC equipment. Economizers save energy by using outside air for cooling when outdoor air temperatures are cooler than return air. Ensure the economizer dampers are operating properly and are controlled accurately by the thermostat.
- **Air Handlers and Fans:** Review supply-air schedules and reduce or shut off outside air during unoccupied periods. Ensure that exhaust fans are also turned off when the building is unoccupied (may not apply to health care or facilities with special ventilation requirements). Regularly check dampers for proper operation.
- **Variable Speed Drives:** Consider variable speed drives for fans and pumps that have a variable load and are 5 HP and larger. This may involve converting a constant-volume system to a variable-air-volume system.

Lighting:

- **Lighting:** Upgrade to high-performance T8 fluorescent lighting. New lamp and ballast combinations deliver the same amount of light but use 10% to 40% less energy than standard fluorescent lighting. Efficient lighting reduces air-conditioning loads and cuts electric demand.
- **Occupancy Sensors:** Install occupancy sensors to control the lighting in spaces with intermittent occupancy such as conference rooms, offices, classrooms, auditoriums and bathrooms.
- **Daylighting:** Install photosensors to maximize use of daylighting, typically within 15 feet of windows. Besides cutting energy use, natural lighting enhances office productivity and provides a connection to the outdoors.

Need help getting started? Contact an MGE account manager at (608) 252-7007. Find more operating tips and free equipment purchasing guides at mge.com/business/saving.