

Energy Tips for Small Businesses

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The Brownsville Public Utilities Board is a full-service, locally owned and operated utility providing electric, water and wastewater service. It has more than 520 dedicated and responsive employees that provide reliable utility service for the City of Brownsville P.O. Box 3270 Brownsville, TX 78523-3270 (956) 982-6100 Fax: (956) 982-6269

Saving a few bucks where you can makes all the difference for many small businesses, especially when the margins might be slim. There are easy adjustments that business owners can make to reduce utility bills. Let's look at five tips to lower your utility bill.

Program your thermostat

Most businesses aren't open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There are periods when no one is at the business, and there is no reason to keep the building cool during that time. Invest in a programmable thermostat so that you can schedule when your air conditioner will come on and at what temperature. Schedule the AC to go to a warmer than normal temperature when people aren't around. Then you can schedule the air conditioner to cool to your desired working temperature 30 minutes to an hour before opening time. By the time employees start arriving for work, the office will be nice and cool. Of course, if you have sensitive materials at your business that require certain temperature conditions, make sure to adhere to those guidelines. Otherwise, there's no reason to cool an empty office. Air conditioning typically makes up the largest consumption for most accounts.

Switch to LED bulbs.

LEDs are far more energy efficient than traditional incandescent bulbs and also more efficient than compact fluorescent lights (CFLs). The more lights that a business has, the more savings there is to be had. For places with large spaces that require a lot of light, LEDs will greatly reduce the amount of energy consumption. Keppel AmFELS is a great case study for that. That company was able to slash its consumption by 75 percent. This resulted in a lot of savings that the company was able to invest into other areas. Trico also benefited from an LED conversion. The company reported they needed fewer lights, used less energy and got a better quality of light for the intricate manufacturing work it needs to do. LED bulbs also give off much less heat, which means your air conditioner won't have to run quite so hard to compensate.

Install motion lighting

It's easy to forget to switch off a light. Many times, people get in the habit of leaving all business lights on at all times during business hours. This is unnecessary and can be wasteful. Install motion sensors that communicate with your lighting. The break area that is usually unoccupied will only get a light when someone is there. The bathroom is also a great place to install these lights. It might not seem like a lot, but those little bit of savings can add up.

Turn off equipment not in use or use energy-saving mode

Most copy machines, computers, shredders and other office equipment don't need to be on and running at all times. If it's not being used on a full-time basis, make sure to turn it off or take advantage of an energy saving feature. Some equipment lists it as sleep mode or hibernation. Check the equipment's settings or refer

to the manual. Also, make sure all computers and office equipment are turned off at the end of the work day. If you don't use something very often, keep it unplugged. Many different types of electronic equipment will keep on pulling a small amount of electricity even when turned off. This is called vampire energy. Put a stake in that vampire energy by unplugging unused equipment.

Get an energy audit

The BPUB Energy Efficiency & Conservation Department can provide tips to save money for your business. Get an expert eye to evaluate your business and provide ways to reduce your utility bill. The BPUB coordinator will see how water and electricity are used at your advice and observe the conditions of the building to determine the best course of action to reduce your water and energy consumption. Some might be easy fixes, while others might require additional investments, but you can have the information you need to decide what changes you can make. Call 956-983-6284 to schedule your energy audit today.