



Tips on Conserving Electricity and Switching to Clean Energy

The general consensus is that we can best reduce greenhouse gas emissions by choosing electricity instead of fossil fuels to heat/cool our homes and power our vehicles. We can now generate electricity using clean, renewable sources (such as wind, solar, and hydro) at competitive prices. So it makes sense to attack the problem on two fronts: continuing to build infrastructure for electricity generated by renewable sources while at the same time replacing our oil- and gas-burning furnaces with electrically powered heat pumps for heating and cooling, and replacing our petroleum-powered internal-combustion-driven cars with clean, efficient electric cars.

New York State has set ambitious goals for switching to clean energy and it offers programs and incentives. Learn more at NYSERDA (New York State Energy Research and Development Authority) <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/> and at Sustainable Westchester <https://sustainablewestchester.org/>. ConEd also offers programs and rebates (<https://www.coned.com/en>).

More tips...

*ConEd controls the electrical grid in Bronxville, but if you live in your own home you can choose another company, a clean energy provider (ESCO), for your electrical power. Another option: go to <https://westchesterpower.org/> to learn about Community Choice Aggregation, in which an entire community chooses a clean energy provider.

*When buying new appliances, look for the Energy Star label for proven efficiency and savings on your electric bill.

*Your home may be leaking heat. Consider getting a home-energy audit to identify steps you can take to seal leaks, increase energy efficiency, save money, and reduce your carbon footprint. NYSERDA and Sustainable Westchester have information on current programs, rebates, and contractors.

*Both NYSERDA and Sustainable Westchester provide information on how to switch to clean, electric heating and cooling systems, such as air- and ground-source (also called geothermal) heat pumps, for single-family homes and multi-story apartment dwellers. Both offer rebates.

*Consider installing solar panels on your roof. They won't work for everyone in Bronxville because we have so many trees, and it's important to maintain our tree canopy, but if your home is situated to allow for solar, you may be surprised to learn that solar panels can save you money while helping the environment.

*If solar panels don't work for you, Sustainable Westchester's Community Solar program provides a way for you to subscribe to solar energy that is generated elsewhere.

*Maybe it's time to consider purchasing an electric car—for many families, they make perfect second cars. NYSERDA can help you recoup the cost of installing a charger in your garage, whether you live in a single-family home or a multi-story apartment complex.

*LED lightbulbs have improved—they last longer, cost far less than they did just a few years ago, and provide pleasing light.

*Your electronics use energy even when they're "sleeping." Consider plugging them into power strips and turning off the strip each night. When you leave the house for any extended period, such as a vacation, turn off and unplug everything that's not essential. Yes, as long as it's plugged in, it still draws energy.

*Turn off the lights when you're the last person to leave the room.

*Run washing machines, driers, and dishwashers only when they are full, and consider running them during off-peak hours when there's less demand for electricity.

*Be mindful of the number of electronic devices you own that need to be charged. Can you function with fewer? Can you take care to unplug once the device is charged?

Last updated June 2020