May 2010 EnergyWise℠ Tip: Reduce "Phantom" Energy Loss

Did you know that even after you push the OFF button on your TV remote, that high-tech, flat screen, although darkened, may continue to draw electric power costing you money unnecessarily? It's a distinct possibility. Many of today's electric-powered appliances and electronic components, like televisions and computers, continue to use power after they are shut off. The amount of energy a typical household may lose to these "phantom" loads can range from 4 to 12 percent, according to recent electrical industry studies.

Individual rates of loss will vary depending upon the number and efficiency of a home's electric and electronic appliances and equipment, and on a home owner's individual usage patterns. But, for the average household, the cost is approximately $70 per year paying for electricity to run household components that are supposedly turned off.

With that in mind, May's EnergyWise℠ tip offers you ways to reduce phantom energy loss in your homes.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, NPPD and your local electric utility, here are some things you can do to reduce phantom loads and become more energy efficient.

- In the average home, 75 percent of the electricity used to power home electronics is consumed while the products are turned off. This loss of energy can be avoided by unplugging the appliance or using a power strip to cut all power to the appliance.
- Unplug battery chargers when the batteries are fully charged or the chargers are not in use.
- Look for energy-saving ENERGY STAR® home electronics and appliances when shopping for these items.
- According to the U.S. Department of Energy, an ENERGY STAR® computer uses 70 percent less electric energy than computers without this designation. If left inactive, ENERGY STAR® computers enter a low-power mode. Spending a large portion of time in low-power mode saves energy and helps equipment run cooler and last longer.
- A common misconception is that equipment lasts longer if it is never turned off. This is not true. If you are not using your electric-powered equipment, turning it completely off is always the better energy-saving strategy.

Your public power electric utility wants you to get the most value for your money, each and every time you turn on a switch. It costs far less to save a kilowatt-hour than it does to build a new power plant to generate one.

For more information, visit your local public power utility representative or go to nppd.com.