

## Electrical Energy Saving Practices for Winter and Beyond

By Eric Shatzer

With winter upon us, and with the economy still stagnant, it is more important than ever to control electrical energy usage and costs. While energy prices continue to rise, planning ahead for your property's electrical energy needs will save time, money and resources. Partnering with a trusted electrical service provider will ensure that you're maximizing your savings—savings that are not only healthy for the environment, but also healthy for your bottom line. Here are some proactive measures that will ensure that your property is well-prepared for winter and beyond.

The first step toward ensuring maximum energy savings is the implementation of Electrical Preventative Maintenance (EPM). Costly electrical failures can be avoided by proactively taking care of your property's electrical system. According to the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), the failure rate of electrical components is three times higher for systems where preventive maintenance is not performed. Consult with your electrical service partner to determine when and how preventative maintenance should be performed for your property.

In addition to EPM, one of the most cost-effective methods for electrical energy savings is the use of variable-speed drives (VSDs). Without VSDs, pumps and fans will operate at a constant speed, using electrical energy at the full-load rate, even when they're performing at a lower rate. Incorporating VSDs into applications such as fans, pumps and cooling towers can reduce energy use up to 50 percent by providing load control when the load varies, which is most of the time when moving fluids. VSDs also reduce equipment wear and lower maintenance costs.

There are many other simple yet effective ways of minimizing energy use. Replacing old T12 florescent lamps and ballasts with new T8 or T5 lamps and ballasts can result in an average of 40% energy savings. They improve the quality of the lighting and color rendering, while also operating quietly. LED lighting upgrades will also result in long-term savings, and the initial implementation costs have become more affordable with several product options available for retro fit.

Turning the lights off when not in use is still one of the simplest ways to cut energy costs. And this can be done more easily today than ever before with Occupancy/Vacancy motion sensors that automatically turn lights off when the room is vacant. Daylight sensing can also control the amount of lighting based on need, depending on the natural light already coming into a room. While these measures have an initial cost to implement, they will more than pay for themselves when used in the appropriate environment.

Don't be caught off guard this winter. Seek guidance from your electrical service partner now on how to achieve the most energy savings for your property, while maintaining a healthy electrical system year round.

**About the Author**

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