

Home Energy Efficiency Handbook

Renters



Conserve energy and save money!

Foreword

Balancing energy costs with other expenses can be challenging for many Clark County residents. The tips in this home energy efficiency guide are ways to lower energy usage and energy bills.

This guide can help you:

1. Know what to look for before renting, including key questions to ask about utility costs, energy systems, and overall efficiency
2. Identify practical, renter-friendly tips

By using some or all the tips in this guide, you will be able to ***conserve energy and save money.***

On behalf of All-In Clark County, it's our pleasure to share the resources in this guide. We are committed to reducing our region's contribution to climate change and preparing for its impacts

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed for **renters** seeking practical ways to improve their home's energy efficiency, performance, and comfort.

The first section introduces what energy efficiency is, explains its benefits, and outlines how renters can incorporate efficiency into their homes.

The main section offers questions to ask your landlord and simple steps you can take as a renter to reduce energy use.

A Glossary is at the end, sharing commonly used terms associated with home upgrades, appliances, and energy efficiency.



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Understanding Energy Efficiency

What is Energy Efficiency?

Energy efficiency means using less energy to accomplish the same task. Many homes, buildings, and everyday products use more energy than necessary due to inefficiencies and waste.

Improving energy efficiency is one of the simplest and most effective ways to reduce energy use, cut utility bills, and lessen environmental impact.

Benefits of Saving Energy

Lowering your energy use can create **savings on your utility bill**.

Energy efficiency can improve indoor air quality, offering **health benefits** through better air circulation and cleaner energy sources.

Benefits of Energy Efficiency

Most renters pay their own energy bills but have limited influence over major features of a home, such as insulation, ventilation, or heating and cooling systems. Even so, renters still have many practical, low-cost opportunities to improve comfort and reduce monthly utility expenses.

This guide outlines simple, renter-friendly changes, along with habits you can adopt, that make a meaningful difference without requiring major upgrades.

If you are interested in larger improvements, like new appliances or better weather sealing, **start by reviewing your lease and discussing options with your landlord or property manager**.

Once you understand what's allowed in your rental unit, start small. Sealing drafts, adjusting thermostat settings, switching to efficient lighting, and using appliances wisely can all contribute to a more energy-efficient and affordable home.

Energy Efficiency for Renters

What's in this section:

- Before You Rent
- Tips for Current Renters



Before you rent...

Overview: Knowing what to ask your landlord can help you narrow high-quality leasing options and avoid unexpectedly high utility bills. This section outlines key questions to ask and important factors to consider before signing any lease.

Utility Information

1. *Ask the building owner which utilities you are responsible for, and the average cost for each utility.*
2. *Ask if the building has energy ratings, labels or certifications such as Energy Star.*

Metering

1. *Ask if your apartment is individually metered/sub-metered or master metered.*
 - Master metering uses one meter to measure usage across multiple tenants; the property owner then issues an averaged bill. This system doesn't help residents track their own usage or save on energy.
 - Sub-metering offers residents the ability to check their utility usage. Sub-metering gives renters more control over future usage and cost savings.

Heating and Cooling Systems

1. *Ask how old the heating and air conditioning system is and where it is located.*
 - Older systems are less efficient and cost more to operate.



Water Heating

1. *Ask how old the water heater is and where it is located.*
2. *Ask the type of fuel used for water heating. You should make sure it is the least expensive fuel in your area.*

Thermostat Control

1. *Ask if you have thermostat control of heating in your individual unit and if it is programmable.*

Air Infiltration/Draftiness

1. *Check for drafts around windows, doors, or pipes.*

Window

1. *Check to see if the windows are double pane. These windows help save on cooling and heating costs.*
2. *Ensure windows, window screens, or storm windows are operational.*
3. *Look for drapes, window coverings, and block-out shades.*
4. *Ask about window fall protection for family safety.*

Appliances

1. *Inspect the gaskets and coils on your refrigerator, washing machine, dishwasher, oven, and dryer to ensure they are clean and properly tightened.*
2. *Ask about the age and current operating condition of the appliances.*
3. *Ask whether the appliances are Energy Star certified.*

Insulation

1. *Ask about the insulation levels in the outside walls, ceiling, and floor.*
2. *Ask if the building has been weatherized.*



Tips for Current Renters

OVERVIEW

If you are looking for a healthier, more sustainable home, review the tips below. You will find practical, renter-friendly steps to improve energy efficiency and lower your utility bills. Even small changes can save you money, and some changes cost nothing at all.

Be sure to check your lease for any restrictions or guidelines regarding allowable improvements.

FREE FIXES



Set computers to go into standby mode after 30 minutes of inactivity



Hang clothes to dry



Set your refrigerator to 35-38°F and your freezer to 0-5°F



Program your thermostat, or manually dial it back at night or while you are away



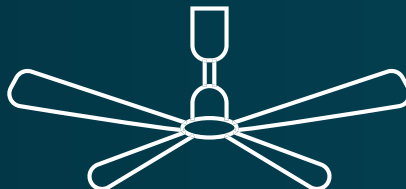
Use shades and blinds to help minimize sunlight heating your home during the summer



Use sunlight from windows instead of turning on lights during cooler months, when possible



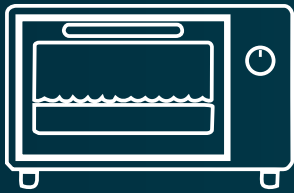
Set water heater temperature to 120 degrees Fahrenheit



Use ceiling/stand-alone fans

- In the summer, set your fan motors to a counterclockwise rotation to create a breeze.
- In the winter, set your fan motors to a clockwise rotation to help push warm air down.





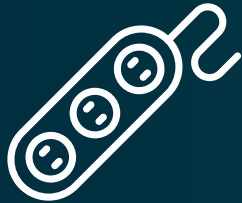
Use electric kettles, crockpots, or toasters instead of a gas range and oven



Run full loads in the washing machine and dryer and wash clothes in cold water

SMALL UPGRADES

Check with your rental manager before purchasing or installing appliances or plumbing fixtures



Use energy-efficient power strips for electronics, including gaming consoles, streaming devices, and desktop computers



Use high-efficiency showerheads and faucets



Replace your non-programmable thermostat with a smart thermostat or learning thermostat



Replace old light bulbs with LED light bulbs



Choose high efficiency or Energy Star Certified personal appliances and electronics



Weatherstrip doors and windows with foam

Glossary

Condenser coils – a component in air conditioning and refrigeration systems that helps the refrigerant release heat. Typically found at the back or bottom of the appliance; dirty coils impede heat transfer and require more energy.

Energy Star – a certification established in 1992 by the US EPA and US DOE. Appliances that meet certain energy efficiency standards can display the energy star logo.

Foam gaskets/tape – flexible sealing and insulating material to be placed between two surfaces to prevent leaks and reduce a home's HVAC load.

Foam sealant – a type of sealant that expands after application to fill gaps, cracks, and crevices.
Heating and cooling system – a system designed to regulate the temperature, humidity, and air quality within a home.

Home heating system – generates and distributes heat as part of the HVAC system, and typically refers to furnaces, boilers, or heat pumps.

HVAC – abbreviation for Heating, Venting, and Air Conditioning.

Insulation – the ability to resist heat transfer and flow between the house and the outside.

LED – light emitting diode that produces light up to 90% more efficiently than incandescent light bulbs.

Master meter – a single meter that measures the total consumption for an entire property or building.

Refrigerator seals – the airtight barrier between the inside of the fridge and the outside that prevents cool air from escaping.

Storm windows – secondary windows installed either outside/inside existing windows to improve energy efficiency and provide additional protection.

Ventilation system – the process that supplies fresh air to an enclosed space, removes stale or polluted air, and maintains air quality, temperature, and humidity.

Weatherization – process of protecting a building from the elements and improving its energy efficiency by adding insulation, sealing air leaks, and improving ventilation.

Weatherstrip – the process of sealing openings around doors and windows.

Conclusion

This guide and accompanying resources reflect All-In Clark County's commitments to serving the community and addressing the regional impacts of climate change.

By providing our comprehensive energy efficiency guidance for homes, we hope to empower residents to conserve energy, save money, and improve the comfort of their homes.

On behalf of All-In Clark County, it is our pleasure to support our community as we address the local impacts of climate change.

Best,



Allin@clarkcountynv.gov

