

Back to School Tips



As students return to school, it's time to think about lessons we can all learn about energy efficiency and savings. Across Virginia, schools and universities are implementing plans to reduce energy. It's energy sense homework you can easily apply in your home and office. Our combined efforts will help Virginia achieve its goal to reduce the growing amount of electricity we consume each year.

- As it gets darker earlier, replace regular light bulbs with energy efficient compact fluorescent lights (CFLs). Consider LED lights for outdoor areas, especially for lights you leave on overnight. Switching one CFL can save \$40 or more over the lifetime of the bulb and LED lights use at least 75% less energy than incandescent lighting.
- In the classroom or the office, work with your IT department to set up energy efficient features on computers, like turning off screen savers, utilizing "sleep" mode controls and developing nighttime shut down protocols. Entering a low-power sleep mode can save up to \$50 a computer per year.
- Turn off and unplug machines and lights when they are not in use. Especially in office

[America's Home Energy Education Challenge](#)

Virginia residents aren't the only ones taking energy savings seriously. The White House, the U.S. Department of Energy and the National Science Teachers Association have created [America's Home Energy Education Challenge](#) to encourage students and families to be energy conscious. The challenge includes a contest that gives students and families the opportunity to earn awards for their school. Those schools participating are eligible to compete for prizes up to \$200,000! To participate, students need to:

- Register by October 7, 2011 [here](#)
- Collect 3

buildings where you may have little control over the indoor temperature, a space heater will use energy even if it's turned off (and if it's still plugged in it can be a real safety hazard).

- As you begin to pack up summer clothes and activities for storage, ensure your attic and basement are properly insulated. According to the Department of Energy, if you reduce drafts in your home you can cut your energy bill by as much as 30%!

Saving energy not only saves you money, but it's a great opportunity to help kids learn important lessons in math, science and economics. Here are some other great resources you can use to help teach the importance of energy efficiency:

- [Energy 101](#) for students and lesson plans for teachers, from DOE's energy kids page
- [Interactive education tools](#) and games for kids, also from DOE
- Kid-friendly [resources and materials](#) from ENERGY STAR
- ENERGY STAR [tips and information for K-12 Schools](#), including a coloring book, Horton Hears a Who Tip Sheet and a Horton Activity Book

[Virginia Energy Sense](#)

Welcomes Our Partners

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This summer, we announced a major initiative to work with Virginia businesses and organizations to help spread the word about the importance of saving energy. Partners are helping educate their customers, members and employees by distributing tips and information and sharing their own energy saving success stories from which we can all learn.

To see who has joined the [Virginia Energy](#)

consecutive months of home energy consumption from September-December 2011

- Analyze the data to learn ways to reduce energy use
- Draft an energy savings plan for their home.

Once you've implemented your plan, be amazed by the energy you can save with a little effort and a few simple steps! You can continue your plan and learning beyond the contest with resources provided by [Virginia Energy Sense](#), your utilities and friends and neighbors.

To learn more, visit our [At School](#) page or check out the U.S. Department of Energy [education resources](#).

[Sense](#) team or learn about how your office or organization can join us, visit our [partner page](#) or contact us at energysense@scc.virginia.gov.



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