HORNSBY SHIRE COUNCIL

DIY fact sheet

Reduce your appliance standby power consumption

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One of the easiest ways to save energy is to switch appliances off at the power point when they are not in use. This is because appliances left on in ‘standby’ mode often still consume electricity. In fact, around 10% of household electricity usage is due to standby power consumption.
Turning appliances off at the wall can be quite difficult for power points that are in hard to reach places. Without seeing these power points, it’s also very easy to forget they are even on. There are a few steps that you can take to make turning off standby quick and easy.

What you need

There are a number of products available to help you reduce standby power consumption. They are available at hardware and electronics stores and on-line. They include:

- Direct switches - allow you to manually turn wall outlets on and off by moving the switch to a better location. (FIG 1)
- Timer switches - automatically turn on and off at set times. They are available as digital or mechanical devices with 24 hour or seven day cycles. (FIG 2)
- Master / slave power boards - one ‘master’ outlet automatically turns the ‘slave’ outlets on or off when the main appliance is turned on or off. (FIG 3)
- Remote switches - allow you to turn power points on and off using a remote control. (FIG 4)

Figure 1.

What you need

Direct switches
Direct switches are easy to use, simply plug them in and place the button where you want to use it. These devices come in the format of regular 'on/off' buttons which can be wall or desk mounted, or as a foot-pedal operated switch or power board.

Timer switches
Timer switches (Figure 2) are most suited to appliances that are used regularly and can easily be forgotten about. Heaters, pumps, outdoor lighting or a drinks fridge only needed on the weekend are a few examples. Just set the timer (following the specific product instructions), plug it into the usual power point then plug the appliance in.

Master / slave power boards
Master / slave power boards (Figure 3) can be installed at computer or entertainment system set ups where multiple appliances are used together. Plug the power board into the usual wall outlet and plug the main appliance (the computer or TV) into the 'master' socket. Then, plug the other appliances (printer, modem, speakers etc) into the 'slave' sockets. Now, whenever you turn your computer on or off, all of the 'slave' appliances will be turned on or off automatically at the same time. These power boards also have an independent socket for appliances that need to be on continuously.

Remote controlled switches
Remote switches (Figure 4) can be used for power outlets that are in hard to reach places. Plug the remote controlled power outlet into the normal power outlet then plug the appliance into it. Follow the specific product instructions on how to use the remote. It's also a good idea to mount the remote on the wall next to the light switch so that you can easily switch off the power whenever you leave the room.

Figure 2.

Figure 3.

Figure 4.

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