

Sustainable Orange County Newsletter

For a Greener Future
Explore.Learn.Act

Volume 1, 2011

Welcome to the e-Newsletter for the Sustainable Orange County community.



In this issue:

- [How to Handle Broken and Burned Out CFL Bulbs?](#)
- [Program offers Free or Reduced Cost Residential Energy Assessment](#)
- [Should You Consider "LED" Lights?](#)
- [Small Business Increases Bottom Line with Energy Efficiency](#)
- [Sponsors – Supporting the Sustainable Orange County Community!](#)

Did you know?

Raise Your Energy IQ



"Energy Vampires" are the standby energy used by some products when they are turned off but still uses power from a wall outlet while not providing any useful functions such as remote control and clock displays. These "Energy Vampires" are slowly sucking energy from your home!

According to ENERGY STAR, an average U.S. household spends \$100 per year to power devices while they are off (or in standby mode).



You can slay the energy vampires by (1) look for ENERGY STAR products; (2) Use power saver mode when available; (3) Use a power strip as a central "turn off" point and (4) unplug chargers for cell phones, battery chargers, when not in use.

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How to Handle Broken and Burned Out Compact Fluorescent Light (CFL) Bulbs?

ENERGY STAR qualified CFLs use up to 75 percent less electricity than incandescent light bulbs, last up to 10 times longer, cost little up front, and provide a quick return on the the additional cost of the CFL bulb over incandescent bulb.



CFLs contain a very small amount of mercury sealed within the glass tubing – an average of 4 milligrams (mg). By comparison, older thermometers contain about 500 milligrams of mercury – an amount equal to the mercury in 125 CFLs. Mercury is an essential part of CFLs; it allows the bulb to be an efficient light source. No mercury is released when the bulbs are intact (not broken) or in use.



Electricity use is the main source of mercury emissions in the U.S. CFLs use less electricity than incandescent lights, meaning CFLs reduce the amount of mercury into the environment. **The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends that CFLs are recycled where possible, to further maximize mercury savings by avoiding CFLs in landfills.**

[Click here for a list of CFL Recycling Centers in Orange County](#)

CFLs are made of glass and can break if dropped or roughly handled. Be careful when removing the bulb from its packaging, installing it, or replacing it. Always screw and unscrew the light bulb by its base (not the glass), and never forcefully twist the CFL into a light socket.



Fluorescent light bulbs contain a small amount of mercury sealed within the glass tubing. When a fluorescent bulb breaks in your home, some of this mercury is released as mercury vapor. **To minimize exposure to mercury vapor, EPA recommends that residents follow cleanup and disposal steps.** A cleanup overview is described below; please visit epa.gov/cfl/cflcleanup.html for more information.

The most important steps to reduce exposure to mercury vapor from a broken bulb are:

1. Before cleanup

- a. Have people and pets leave the room.
- b. Air out the room for 5-10 minutes by opening a window or door to the outdoor environment.
- c. Shut off the central forced air heating/air conditioning (H&AC) system, if you have one.
- d. Collect materials needed to clean up broken bulb.

2. During cleanup

- a. Be thorough in collecting broken glass and visible powder.
- b. Place cleanup materials in a sealable container.

3. After cleanup

- a. Promptly place all bulb debris and cleanup materials outdoors in a trash container or protected area until materials can be disposed of properly. Avoid leaving any bulb fragments or cleanup materials indoors.
- b. For several hours, continue to air out the room where the bulb was broken and leave the H&AC system shut off.

Additional information is available on www.SustainableOrangeCounty.org.

[Back to Top](#)

Comparison of New York State Energy Upgrade Financing Programs

Most Orange County households are eligible for a free or reduced cost residential energy audit, through the GREEN JOBS GREEN NEW YORK program.



A free energy audit is available for Orange County residents with annual household income less than \$166,800 and not already received a free/reduced cost audit. A reduced cost energy audit is available for annual household income greater than \$166,800 but less than \$333,600.

The GREEN JOBS GREEN NEW YORK program is administered by NYSERDA (New York State Energy Research and Development Authority). Please visit [NYSERDA's program website](#) for more information on the program's free/reduced cost energy audit and financing program.

[Back to Top](#)

Should You Consider "LED" Lights?



On the horizon and constantly improving are solid-state lights made of "Light Emitting Diodes" or LEDs. LED lights are already widely used in low-power flat screen TVs, holiday and decorative lights, and emergency lights in commercial buildings. LEDs are also beginning to be used in street lights, traffic lights and in certain interior lighting applications.

You can buy LED replacements for incandescent bulbs today in many different configurations. However, they are comparatively expensive and some may not perform very well. Source: U.S Energy Information Administration

You should look for LED products registered with the "Lighting Facts" program of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), and that they have a "[Lighting Facts Label](#)" on the package before purchase.



Learn more about where LED lights should be considered:

- [Promising LED applications](#)



[Back to Top](#)

Small Business Increases Bottom Line with Energy Efficiency

Small businesses are an underserved and hard to reach market for energy efficiency services. Many small businesses do not have the time or manpower to understand the benefits of energy efficiency. Consequently, most rely on their local contractors for recommendations. Many small businesses only interact with a contractor at times of emergencies, and some contractors don't offer planning services to reflect the benefits of energy efficiency improvements.



Small businesses, particularly the very smallest, can increase their bottom line by lowering utility costs. In this economy the difference can be posting a profit or a loss. Too many small businesses are not aware of the opportunities to take advantage of incentives and programs designed especially for smaller commercial utility customers. Orange and Rockland, Central Hudson and NYSEG are offering Small Business Programs.

In commercial buildings and non-industrial facilities where many small businesses operate, electricity consumed by the lights can account for a significant portion of the utility cost - responsible for over 20% of the electricity bills. Many small businesses have concerns with the perceived high cost to upgrade to more efficient lights, or that the only way to save is to dimmed or eliminate lighting fixtures. These inaccurate perceptions are preventing too many small businesses to do something that can improve their situation.



For small business and government customers with an average demand use of 100 kW or less, O&R will help reduce your company's energy costs by installing energy efficient equipment. Interested customers will be provided with a FREE energy survey. For energy efficiency measures recommended from the survey,

O&R will pay up to 70% of the installation and equipment cost. The energy efficiency measures will be installed by Willdan Energy Solutions, O&R's implementation contractor.

To learn more about the O&R Small Business Program, please visit the "[SAVE MONEY](#)" page or by calling WILLDAN ENERGY SOLUTIONS at 1-888-WILLDAN (1-877-786-0555) to schedule a free no-obligation energy survey.

More information is also available on the [O&R incentive website](#).



For a limited time only, Central Hudson is offering free money for businesses to upgrade to brighter, but more energy-efficient lighting. You have no out-of-pocket costs. What an easy way to go green and save money while brightening up your workplace! Central Hudson pays for 70% of the project and you can cover the remaining 30% with 0% financing from Central Hudson. Pay back the loan with energy savings – usually in less than a year!

To learn more about the Central Hudson Program, please visit the "[SAVE MONEY](#)" page or by Call 845-486-5221 to schedule your free energy audit. Central Hudson's lighting partner – Alliance Energy Solutions – will perform the audit, install the new lights and handle all the paperwork.

More information is also available on the [Central Hudson website](#).



The NYSEG Small Business Energy Efficiency Program offers their respective commercial customers with monthly demand less than 100 kilowatts a free energy assessment of their facility and installation of lighting upgrades identified by the energy assessment. The small business customers receives clear energy savings opportunities from the free energy assessment. If retrofitting lights is one of the identified energy savings opportunities, NYSEG will cover 70% of the cost of the recommended upgrades.

This direct install program includes retrofitting linear fluorescent fixtures with higher efficiency lamps and ballasts; exit signs to LED lighting; occupancy sensors; and incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs). This

is a great opportunity for NYSEG small business customers to save on their energy costs using a professionally performed free energy assessment and to make informed, bottom-line business decisions based on clearly quantified information.

To learn more about the NYSEG Small Business Energy Efficiency Program, please visit the "[SAVE MONEY](#)" page or by calling EnerPath, the contractor hired by NYSEG to administer the program, at 1-877-359-9814.

For NYSEG customers, click [here](#) to learn more about your eligibility and how to get started.

[Back to Top](#)
