

Renew Amherst Newsletter

For a Greener Future
Explore.Learn.Act



Volume 1, 2011

Welcome to the e-Newsletter for the Renew Amherst community.



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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.

Pass it On!

Help RenewAmherst reach as many residents as possible by forwarding this email to your Amherst neighbors, friends and family - encourage them to sign-up for the RenewAmherst email-newsletter. They only need to provide an email address in the Sign-Up form.

Yes, I want to become a member of the RenewAmherst mailing list.

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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 Erie 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.RenewAmherst.org.

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Comparison of New York State Energy Upgrade Financing Programs

Most Erie 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 Erie County residents with annual household income less than \$127,400 and not already received a free/reduced cost audit. A reduced cost energy audit is available for annual household income greater than \$127,400 but less than \$254,800.

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.

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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](#)



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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. One such a program is the Small Business Program offered by National Grid.

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 doing something that can improve their situation.

nationalgrid The National Grid Small Business Program offers their respective commercial customers with monthly demand less than 100 kilowatts a free energy audit of their lighting equipment, and if applicable, the walk-in cooler. The small business customers will receive a clear report of recommended energy efficiency improvements. If retrofitting lights, occupancy sensors and walk-in cooler are identified as recommended energy savings opportunities, National Grid will cover 70% of the cost of the recommended upgrades and you can finance your share of the cost, interest free for up to 24 months!

To learn more about the National Grid Small Business Program, please visit the "[SAVE MONEY](#)" page or by completing an National Grid [Online Registration](#) Form.

More information is also available on the [National Grid website](#).

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