Phantom Energy Tip Sheet

Even when office equipment, such as computers, printers and copiers are turned off, they continue to draw power from the outlet. This is referred to as "phantom energy" and can cost a business hundreds of dollars annually in wasted energy.

Here are some common questions about phantom energy and how to prevent it:

Q. What equipment has the most phantom drain?

A: The Lawrence Berkeley National Lab says equipment with the most "phantom energy" drain includes:

- A remote control

- An external power supply

- A digital display, LED status light or digital clock

- A battery charger

This includes cell phone and device chargers, computers, printers, and cordless phones.

Q. How can I reduce the phantom drain of this equipment?

A. Unplug all equipment from the outlet after it is turned off, especially overnight. If that is too time-consuming, buy power strips so you can flick one switch to "unplug" multiple devices at once. It's a good idea to plug similar items into one strip. For instance, you might plug your computer and printer on one and your entertainment devices into another.

Standard power strips cost $15 or less, while specialized ones, such as the motion-sensing Watt Stopper, that turn off everything when you turn off your equipment, may run $50 to $90. *Please note that when a surge protected power strip is turned off, the devices plugged into it will not be protected from a surge if it occurs.*

Q. How much money will reducing my business's phantom energy use save me?

A. How much energy you save depends on how many pieces and types of equipment your business uses. These two sites show you the phantom power usage of various types of office equipment:

- http://standby.lbl.gov/summary-table.html

- http://www.energysavers.gov/your_home/appliances/index.cfm/mytopic=10040

The amount of money wasted on phantom energy when you factor in all the devices plugged into the wall can up to $100 or more annually.

Have questions or need help? Call Energy Smart anytime at (651)292-4653.