



Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life



CHANGE FOR THE
BETTER WITH
ENERGY STAR

Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life & ENERGY STAR® Congregations Network Synagogue Stewardship Action List

Stewardship of the Earth. Like most faiths, Judaism has a tradition of ethical concern for both the natural resources that support life, and the financial resources that support religious and educational projects. Both are called “stewardship,” and both imply conservation. Wasted energy is not only poor stewardship of funds, but wasted natural resources, causing unnecessary pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

ENERGY STAR Congregations Network is a free service of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, offering technical support and public recognition for voluntary congregational energy efficiency. More detailed information is available in **ENERGY STAR**’s free 100-page Guidebook, *“Putting Energy into Stewardship.”* To learn more, please visit www.energystar.gov/congregations.

The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) is a multi-denominational effort to deepen the Jewish community’s commitment to the stewardship of creation, and to mobilize the resources of Jewish life and learning to protect the Earth and all its inhabitants. Its website, www.coejl.org, is a primary resource for Jewish environmentalism.

COEJL’s Greening Synagogues initiative exists to help your congregation and community learn how to lessen its environmental impact -- see www.coejl.org. In addition to a growing community consultation program, **COEJL** offers these and other written resources for synagogues:

- How, and why, to ‘green’ every part of your synagogue’s building and grounds
- Ideas for purchasing in eco-friendly ways, including paper, lightbulbs, cleaning supplies, and more
- Program suggestions, from holiday observance to social action ideas to the environment in Israel
- Adult and youth educational materials
- Resources for Rabbis

More detail is available on the **COEJL** web site, including follow-up to many of the energy-saving tips outlined here. **COEJL** and **ENERGY STAR** are happy to collaborate on this document, which summarizes many ways that you and your synagogue can cut energy use, pollution, global warming emissions, and utility bills all at once. Please join us as we protect creation, from generation to generation.

LIGHTING

- Turn off lights (and other equipment) when not in use. High utility costs, and pollution, begin with paying for energy that is completely wasted.
- Install occupancy sensors in proper locations to automatically turn off lighting when no one is present, and back on when people return. Remember not to install the sensor behind a coat rack, door, or bookcase; it works whenever it can “see” an approaching person’s motion to turn on the light, before or as they enter an unlit area.
- Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs), wherever appropriate. CFLs cost about 75% less to operate, and last about 10 times longer. If there’s one easy place to start saving money and energy, this is it.
- Adjust lighting to your actual needs. Use free ‘daylighting’ -- turn off or dim your lights when daylight is adequate, or use automatic “daylight-dimming” ballasts/controls to do this for you.
- To prevent glare, eyestrain, and headaches, don’t ‘over-light.’ Too much light may be as bad for vision as too little light -- but costs a lot more.
- Install brighter, safer, long-lasting light-emitting diode (LED) exit signs. These drastically reduce maintenance costs by making lamp replacement infrequent. Each sign more than pays for itself within 1-2 years, saving some \$24 dollars in annual electricity costs while preventing up to 500 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Consider upgrading to T-8 (1" diameter) fluorescent lamp tubes with solid-state electronic ballasts -- these are more efficient than older T-12 (1.5" diameter) tubes with magnetic ballasts, and provide steadier, better light as well.

OFFICE AND KITCHEN EQUIPMENT

- Consider buying **ENERGY STAR** qualified equipment for your congregation, business and home. The **ENERGY STAR** mark indicates the most efficient computers, printers, copiers, refrigerators, televisions, windows, thermostats, ceiling fans, and other appliances and equipment in their class. Find **ENERGY STAR** qualified products online at www.energystar.gov.
- Clean refrigerator coils twice a year. Replace door gaskets if a dollar bill easily slips out when closed between the door’s seals.
- Turn off computers overnight. If it’s from a power strip, then unused monitors, printers, and other peripheral devices won’t drain electricity.

WATER - HOT AND COLD

- Fix leaks. Small leaks add up to many gallons and dollars wasted each month. Water conservation saves energy and money.
- Use sink aerators and water-efficient showerheads and toilets to save water.
- Install an insulation blanket on older water heaters, and insulate the first 3 feet of the heated water “out” pipe on both old and new units.
- If buying a new water heater, buy **ENERGY STAR** qualified equipment. In areas of infrequent use, consider “tankless” water heaters to reduce “standby” storage costs and waste.
- Set water temperature only as hot as absolutely needed (usually just 110-120 degrees) to prevent scalds, and save energy and money.
- When landscaping, use plants native to your climate that require minimal watering and provide better pest resistance -- saving both water and costs, while providing needed habitat. If possible, divert “gray water” for irrigation.

HEATING AND AIR CONDITIONING

- “Tune-up” your heating, ventilating and air-conditioning (HVAC) system with an annual maintenance contract. Even new **ENERGY STAR** HVAC systems, like new cars, decline in performance without regular maintenance. A yearly maintenance contract costs as little as \$100 (depending on the building and HVAC system), but can save much more. A contract should ensure ‘pre-season’ tune-ups before each cooling and heating season. You save energy and money, and your system may last years longer.
- Change (or clean, if reusable) your HVAC filters every month during peak cooling or heating season. New filters usually cost only \$2 to \$5 each. Dirty filters cost more to use, overwork the equipment, and result in lower indoor air quality.
- Install a programmable thermostat to automate your HVAC system. This device optimizes HVAC operation “24/7” based on your schedule, and can be “overridden” as needed for off-schedule events. So that members always enter a comfortable building, this “smart thermostat” can turn on the HVAC one hour before arrival instead of heating or cooling unoccupied space. These thermostats cost just \$25 to \$150, and proper use cuts HVAC costs considerably.
- Control how much direct sunlight comes through your windows, based on the season and the local climate, to minimize heat & A/C use. During heating season, with the sun low in the southern sky, unobstructed south-facing windows can contribute ‘free’ solar heat gain during the day.

- During cooling season, block direct heat gain from sunlight, especially on the south side of the building. Options like ‘solar screens’ and ‘solar film,’ awnings, and vines might help. Over time, trees (planted near the southwest corner) can shade the building, clean the air, provide habitat and beauty, and lower your bills. Interior curtains or drapes help, but it’s best to prevent summer sun and heat from getting past the glass at all.
- Use fans. Comfort is a function of temperature, humidity, and air movement. Moving air can make a somewhat higher temperature and/or humidity feel comfortable. Fans delay or reduce the need for air conditioning -- setting the A/C at 3 to 5 degrees higher can feel just as comfortable with fans. And each degree can save about 3% on cooling costs. When the temperature outside is more comfortable than inside, a “box fan” in the window or large “whole building” fan in the attic can push air out of the building, and pull in comfortable outside air. Fans can improve comfort and save energy year round.
- Plug leaks with weatherstripping and caulking. Caulking and weatherstripping let you manage your ventilation (the deliberate, controlled exchange of stuffy inside air for fresher outdoor air), while cutting your energy use and bills dramatically. To learn more about indoor air quality in your building visit www.epa.gov/iaq.

CLEAN ENERGY

- Where available, consider buying some or all electricity from a clean, renewable source such as solar or wind power certified by Green-e. Visit www.green-e.org for information.
- Where not available, consider purchasing ‘green tags,’ offsetting your energy use elsewhere.

RELATED LINKS

Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL): <http://www.coejl.org>

ENERGY STAR® Congregations Network (U.S. EPA): <http://www.energystar.gov/congregations>

National Religious Partnership for the Environment (NRPE): <http://www.nrpe.org>

EPA Green Power Partnership:
<http://www.epa.gov/greenpower/>

EPA Global Warming: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/oar/globalwarming.nsf/content/index.html>

The Regeneration Project:
<http://www.theregenerationproject.org/>

Interfaith Power & Light:
<http://www.interfaithpower.org/>