

What does energy efficiency mean?

Energy efficiency is using more efficient equipment to accomplish the same results. For example, a compact fluorescent light bulb provides similar light as incandescent bulbs, while using 75% less energy.

How do I become more energy efficient?

There are many ways to become energy efficient. By taking steps such as replacing appliances and equipment with more energy-efficient models, adding automatic or manual energy controls -- like occupancy sensors -- on lights, or improving the insulation in a building, you will reduce your need for energy and pay less on your utility bill.

Businesses and managers can reduce their utility cost and save energy by participating in the Sierra Nevada Energy Watch Program. Through this program, businesses take advantage of a free on-site assessment to identify energy savings and expert installation of energy-saving equipment at greatly reduced cost. Energy efficiency products available to businesses include lighting, water saving devices, refrigeration controls, and more. For more information, contact us or call the Sierra Nevada Energy Watch at 209.532.7200 (Sonora) or 530.582.4800 (Truckee).

What is included in the Sierra Nevada Energy Watch Program?

An energy associate will assist you in identifying and quantifying energy efficiency opportunities. As a business owner, you will receive a free energy audit, a report outlining identified efficiency opportunities, project cost, customer payback, qualifying financial incentives, and estimated utility savings. Program staff coordinates the installation with experienced electrical contractors, and you pay just a fraction of the cost. We will conduct a post-installation inspection and survey to make sure you are satisfied with the services provided.

What is an energy audit?

An energy audit, also called an energy assessment or energy survey, is a process that identifies how energy is being used throughout your property. An audit can help determine opportunities for efficiency improvements.

Who is participating in the Sierra Nevada Energy Watch program?

A wide range of business types, municipalities, and nonprofits are participating in the program. Some examples include restaurants, grocery stores, offices, storage facilities, warehouses, distributors, retail stores, recreation facilities, and health clubs. Only PG&E-serviced customers in the following counties qualify for participation in the Sierra Nevada Energy Watch Program: Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Lassen, Mariposa, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sierra, Sutter, Tuolumne, Yuba.

What is the relationship between the environment and energy consumption?

Buildings and facilities generate greenhouse gas emissions. These gases are created by the combustion of fossil fuels in electric power plants and in gas appliances in homes and businesses. The increasing energy consumption correlates with the rapid formation and concentration of these gases, which in turn contribute to climate change and environmental degradation. Higher temperatures affect local natural ecosystems, sea levels, and air quality. By participating in the Sierra Nevada Watch program, businesses can do their part to protect the environment and future generations, while reducing energy costs.

How much money can I really save by upgrading the lighting in my business?

Depending on your business type, replacing your lighting and installing lighting controls can reduce your utility bill significantly. For instance, you can save up to 35 percent of your energy use by replacing your T12 linear fluorescent lamps and magnetic ballasts with T8 linear fluorescent lamps and electronic ballasts. In addition, low-wattage T8 fluorescent lamps can save an additional 20 percent on energy costs. A single compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL) can last 10 times longer than a regular incandescent bulb and use 66 to 75 percent less energy. LED illumination can reduce about 50 percent of the energy consumption from typical fluorescent lighting in lighting refrigerated areas in a supermarket. No matter what type of lighting measure you have in your business, you can likely reduce costs and conserve energy.