

4 million careful owners

Taking action at home

Your daily decisions about transport, waste and energy use are affecting the climate because of the greenhouse gas emissions they produce. There are many steps you can take to help protect our environment and economy by reducing these emissions in your own household.

What can you do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at home?

Energy

New Zealand homes use 35% of our electricity. Around two thirds of our electricity is generated from renewable sources such as hydro. The remainder is generated from fossil fuels such as coal and gas which emit the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide. To reduce these emissions, we need to think about conserving energy (using less) and being more energy efficient (using energy wisely). Making your home more energy-efficient will also save you money on your power bill.

- Water heating is the single biggest energy consumer in a home. Insulate your hot water cylinder with a wrap and insulate the pipes near the cylinder.
- Use the yellow and red Energy Rating label to compare models when buying whiteware such as fridges, dishwashers and dryers (the higher the number of stars on the label, the better the energy efficiency of the model). The additional cost of an energy efficient model is easily repaid in energy savings.
- Lighting consumes around 10% of the power in your home. Replace the lightbulbs in your most frequently used lights with energy-efficient compact fluorescents (available from supermarkets or hardware stores).



- Turn off lights, appliances & computers when you're not using them.
- Make sure you switch off equipment on 'stand-by' (with display lights and clocks visible) such as televisions, VCRs, DVDs, stereos & microwaves at the wall.
- Wash clothes in cold water (try to wash full loads) & hang clothes out to dry instead of using the dryer.
- Close windows, doors and curtains to keep in the heat.
- Use the dishwasher only when you have a full load.

Did you know?

If we could lift the energy efficiency rating of every household appliance by just half a star it would be the same as taking 12,000 cars off the road. 'Stand-by' energy (e.g. lights & clocks on appliances and using the remote to turn on/off your TV) accounts for about 10% of the electricity we use in our homes. And if every New Zealand home had ceiling insulation we would save 7% of residential electricity use.



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Waste

New Zealanders throw away 3.6 million tonnes of rubbish every year or more than 1000 buses full of rubbish every day! Yet around 65% of this rubbish could be composted or recycled instead.

- Recycle all paper, glass, tin & plastic items.
- Compost all kitchen scraps & garden waste (such 'organic' waste produces the greenhouse gas methane as it breaks down. However, if you compost this waste in your own garden, more oxygen can get into it to help the break-down process than would in a landfill where there are much larger amounts of waste).
- Buy products with less packaging.
- Take a shopping bag to the supermarket instead of using plastic bags each time.

Transport

Transport is our country's single largest energy consumer and it's the fastest growing - within New Zealand, transport accounts for over 43% of all consumer energy use and it produces 46% of the country's carbon dioxide emissions. There are all sorts of small things you can do to cut fuel consumption.

- Walk, cycle or use public transport instead of your car when possible.
- Get your car serviced regularly & keep tyres inflated.
- If your car has a roof rack, remove it when you don't need it (the air drag from a roof rack means your car can use up to 5% more fuel).
- Air-conditioning can add up to 10% to your fuel bill - try using the air vents instead.
- Go easy on the pedal and improve fuel economy - heavy braking and accelerating uses a lot of fuel.
- Choose a fuel-efficient, low-polluting option when buying a car.
- Organise or join a walking school bus in your area (phone Karen Boyes on 09 374 3806 or go to www.eeca.govt.nz and look under the 'Transport' section).

Useful links/websites

www.reducerubbish.govt.nz

(ideas on how to reduce your rubbish)

www.energywise.org.nz

(tips on being more energy efficient)

www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/transport/

(tips on driving more efficiently, and maintaining and buying motor vehicles)

www.climatechange.govt.nz

(the main NZ Climate Change Office website)

www.eeca.govt.nz

(the main Energy Efficiency & Conservation Authority website)

Check out www.4million.org.nz to find out more about how you can join the New Zealanders who are helping to reduce the effects of climate change.

This website also has links to calculators which will help you work out your own greenhouse gas emissions (go to the 'Taking Action' page).



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