



PHANTOM LOADS

Phantom Electrical Loads are loss electricity usage that account for up to 15% of your electricity consumption. This loss comes from a variety of electronics in a variety of ways. Anything from an outdated refrigerator to a rechargeable toothbrush are drawing unneeded kilowatt hours and adding dollars to your electricity bill. The typical house with two TVs, one VCR, one DVD and a cable box will waste approximately 525 KWh/ year. Of this, a significant amount is spent when you are not actually even using your appliances. The average phantom load a TV is responsible for 23 per cent of its total energy output. The VCR's phantom load accounts for 54 per cent of its total electricity usage. When you add up the cost of the various flashing lights, digital clocks on answering machines, phones, fax machines, electric toothbrushes, computers, printers modems, routers, scanners and kitchen appliances, you realize just how much this unseen load racks up on your electric bill. As a prime example, if you use your microwave for less than seven minutes a day, the digital clock will drain more energy during the year than the microwave oven itself.

The trouble is, when you switch something 'off', you haven't cut current of energy running to it. Beginning in the 1970s, manufacturers began making home electronics that went into a sort of 'sleep' mode when the user turned 'off' so that they would be instantly ready to serve their purpose when the user turned them back on again. This tiny output of energy can reach between 20 and 100 dollars annually.

Take a look at the outlets in your home. How many chords do you see leading to an appliance you really don't use very often at all? Just unplug it for now, and hook it up again when the time comes that it will be useful. Consider setting up regularly used appliances in a central location, where they can be connected to a power bar and easily switched off and on as needed. Your home entertainment system or computer areas are ideal spots for a power bar. Before you go to bed and when you go on vacation, unplugging your home's devices is an option which will save electricity and money.

You may consider replacing old models with new, Energy Star certified appliances, as the efficiency has improved on a few home fixtures, such as new VCR and DVD players, which use much less energy in stand-by than a 10 year old counterpart.