

Energy Saving Tips

by Jeffrey Doucette

With ever-increasing utility costs, even small energy savings efforts will add up over the long haul. Installation of new, more energy-efficient equipment is always a plus but can be prohibitive due to the initial cost. Some examples of major equipment purchases would be refrigeration compressor systems, light fixtures that utilize energy-efficient ballasts or a dimmer system for the less active periods, desiccant dehumidification, and natural gas burning water boilers or heaters instead of propane, electric, or oil.

There are smaller less costly options available that may be beneficial, depending upon the set-up and use of your facility. Motion detectors and timers for lighting in less frequently used areas can work very well. Mechanical rooms, locker rooms, offices, party rooms, shower rooms, hallways, even the ice resurfacing machine room, and over-head gas heaters can be refurbished with timers or motion detectors.

As a general rule, most arenas open their doors in the early morning. A staff member makes the rounds of the facility checking everything and getting ready to perform the normal, daily functions. Often this means that lights are turned on and stay on until the facility closes for the day. Not everyone remembers or bothers to turn off the lights in rooms when they leave. Any space that is not continuously occupied during operational hours could be controlled by a timer or motion detector. The energy savings depend on the number of areas affected and time of use. But my philosophy is nothing ventured, nothing lost. "Lost" meaning the number of kilowatt-hours you will be saving. Our local vending machine distributor installed motion detectors near the machines that shut down the lighting inside the machines when not being used. Their claim is that they do not have to replace the bulbs as often, but it adds to the energy savings for the facility as well. For those of you who have game rooms, this might be worth looking into.

Check with your local utility provider for other tips or programs they may have. Our local provider donated 12 heat and motion detectors to our facility and provided suggestions on which rooms they should be used in as well as where in the rooms they should be installed. We also installed timers on our gas heaters over the spectators' seating; some facilities use coin operated timers instead.

Decreasing energy costs is essential to your bottom line. If you have cost saving tips that have worked in your facility, please share them.

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