

Eliminating “Vampire Power” Waste

By Jon Sader

In our modern world, people utilize a variety of electrical devices for their respective comfort, convenience, entertainment, etc. The unfortunate truth is that a portion of the energy is consumed by these products within the home is wasted. Something that the typical homeowner may not realize is that even when these appliances are “off” they are still consuming vast amounts of energy. This wasted energy is technically called “standby power” but is commonly referred to as “vampire electricity”.

According to numerous studies, vampire electricity accounts up to 10% of all the energy consumed within the household. Based on these calculations in 2011, the amount of energy wasted by vampire electricity in the United States was higher than the total energy consumption of both Greece & Switzerland combined¹. Many appliances and devices are notorious for vampire electricity. These devices include:

- Cellphone chargers
- Handheld video game chargers
- Laptop chargers
- AC Adapters (anything that charges a battery)
- Televisions
- VCRs/DVD players/Cable Boxes
- Video Game Consoles
- Kitchen appliances (toasters, coffee makers, etc.)
- Computers
- Cordless telephones
- Any device that can be woken up by a remote control

Almost every home in America has many if not all of these products listed above. The typical home has at least 40 devices plugged in at all times. All of these devices are wasting energy if they are plugged in and not being used. The worst offender is a home’s cable or satellite box. A 2011 Natural Resources Defense Council report states that the 160 million installed cable or satellite boxes are costing Americans \$2 billion in energy annually². If you are suffering from high energy bills, chances are you can help reduce them by identifying these devices in your home.

¹ CIA World Fact Book

² National Resources Defense Council. Energy Facts: Better Viewing, Lower Energy Bills, and Less Pollution



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The best way to reduce vampire electricity is by plugging all of the known energy-wasting devices into a power strip. When these devices are not in use, simply turn the power strip off. If a power strip is not available, unplugging the devices when they are not in use will suffice. Energy Star also takes vampire electricity into account and they place their stamp on products that minimize the amount of energy consumed while turned off. Investing in Energy Star appliances and products will help to offset vampire electricity. Identifying power-sucking devices within your home and using them only when needed will help lower those high energy bills.

