

RESIDENT NEWSLETTER FOR SCATTERED SITES

SPRING ISSUE



VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

APRIL 2011

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The ENERGY STAR Top 10 Energy Tips for Renters



- **Remember to always turn off your lights when leaving a room.**

Lighting is one of the easiest places to start saving energy. Replacing your five most frequently used light fixtures or the bulbs in them with ENERGY STAR qualified lights can save more than \$65 a year in energy costs.

ENERGY STAR qualified light bulbs provide high-quality light output, use 75% less energy, and last 6–10 times longer than standard incandescent light bulbs, saving money on energy bills and replacement costs.

SAVINGS: Turning off just one 60-watt incandescent bulb that would otherwise burn eight hours a day can save about \$15 per year!

- **Install a programmable thermostat to automatically adjust your home's temperature settings when you're away or sleeping.**

Proper use means setting the thermostat at energy-saving temperatures without overriding that setting. You should also set the "hold" button at a constant energy-saving temperature when you're away or on vacation.

SAVINGS: When used properly, a programmable thermostat with its four temperature settings can save up to \$150 a year in energy costs.

- **Unplug any battery chargers or power adapters when not in use.**

Use a power strip as a central "turn off" point when you are done using equipment.

Consumer electronics play a large role in your home's energy consumption, accounting for 15 percent of household electricity use. Many consumer electronics products



Money Isn't All You're Saving

use energy even when switched off. Electronic equipment that has earned the ENERGY STAR helps save energy when off, while maintaining features like clock displays, channel settings, and remote-control functions.

Even when turned off, electronic and IT equipment often use a small amount of electricity. For home office equipment, this stand-by or "phantom" power load can range from a few watts to as much as 20 or even 40 watts for each piece of equipment.

Using a power strip for your computer and all peripheral

equipment allows you to completely disconnect the power supply from the power source, eliminating standby power consumption.

Remember to unplug cell phone chargers!!!

- **A ten minute shower can use less water than a full bath.**

With a new 2.5 gallon-per-minute (low-flow) shower head, a 10-minute shower will use about 25 gallons of water, saving you five gallons of water over a typical bath.

TIP: To avoid moisture problems, control humidity in your bathroom by running your ventilating fan during and 15 minutes after showers and baths.

- **Make sure all air registers are clear of furniture so that air can circulate freely.**

- **Save water by scraping dishes instead of rinsing them before loading in the dishwasher. Run your dishwasher with a full load and use the air-dry option, if available.**

Rinsing dirty dishes before loading your dishwasher uses a lot of water and en-

Hours of Operation

**Monday—Friday
8:30 AM—5:00 PM**

Maintenance Line

301.948.5970

Main Office (EDP)

240.773.9350

Customer Service is our Priority.

You may have noticed calls recently from staff asking the status of work orders and the satisfaction of the services received. We will continue to do this monthly and thank you for your feedback.

Staff is working hard to respond to all your service needs. Please call the maintenance line for service request and contact your property manager for other management related matters (inspections, notice to vacate, etc.).

Thank you for being our customer,

Ninette Patrick

Regional Manager

The ENERGY STAR Top 10 Energy Tips for Renters *(continued)*



Gerald Keating

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ergy. Most dishwashers today can thoroughly clean dishes that have had food scraped. The wash cycle and detergent take care of the rest.

To make the most efficient use of your dishwasher's energy and water consumption, run the dishwasher only when enough dirty dishes have accumulated for a full load.

Nick Hayes

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- **Wash your laundry with cold water whenever possible. To save water, try to wash full loads. If you must wash a partial load, reduce the level of water appropriately.**

Hot water heating accounts for about 90 percent of the energy your machine uses to wash clothes — only 10 percent goes to electricity used by the washer motor.

Depending on the clothes and local water quality (hardness), many homeowners can effectively do laundry exclusively with cold water, using cold water laundry detergents.

SAVINGS: Switching to cold water can save the average household more than \$40 annually (with an electric water heater) and more than \$30 annually (with a gas water heater).

Washing full loads can save you more than 3,400 gallons

of water each year.

- **Don't over dry your clothes.**

If your dryer has a moisture sensor that will automatically turn the machine off when clothes are done, use it to avoid over drying. Remember to clean the lint trap before every load.

Dry full loads, or reduce drying time for partial loads. It's easy to over dry your clothes, if one setting is used for various fabric types.

Try to dry loads made up of similar fabrics, so the entire load dries just as the cycle ends. Many dryers come with energy-saving moisture or humidity sensors that shut off the heat when the clothes are dry.

If you don't have this feature, try to match the cycle length to the size and weight of the load. A dryer operating an extra 15 minutes per load can cost you up to \$34, every year.

TIP: The lint trap is an important energy saver. Dryers work by moving heated air through wet clothes, evaporating and then venting water vapor outside. If the dryer cannot provide enough heat, or move air sufficiently

through the clothes, they will take longer to dry, and may not dry at all.

SAVINGS: One of the easiest things you can do to increase drying efficiency is to clean the lint trap before each and every load. This step also casave you up to \$34 each year.

TOP TIPS!

Light Switch

Remember to always turn off your lights when leaving a room..

HVAC System

Dirt and debris are top causes of heating and cooling system inefficiency and failure. It's important to change your system's air filter regularly.

Nyoka Foster

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Sherraine Bacchus

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Tehanny Pica

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HOC Partnering with Pepco for Energy Wise Rewards™ Program...

HOC is currently partnering with PEPCO to implement the Pepco Energy Wise Rewards™ Program at the HOC Scattered Site properties.

The energy saving benefits of programmable thermostats have been explored by the [U.S. Department of Energy](http://www.energy.gov). According to the DOE, depending on usage patterns

and how effectively you program the thermostat, it is possible to save as much as 10% on home cooling and heating costs, assuming winter set backs and summer set forwards when the home is empty.

For more information be visit the Pepco website at: <https://energywiserewards.p>

epco.com/index.php

Why is Energy Wise Rewards open to Maryland customers only?

The Energy Wise Rewards program is open to enrollment by Maryland customers only based on approval of the Maryland Public Service Commission.

**The following zip codes may have two managers in that area depending on program. Those residents will receive separate notification.*

20854 and 20878

HOC Partnering with Pepco for Energy Wise

Rewards™ Program... (continued)

When regulatory approval is received for the other jurisdictions, Pepco expects to market this program and potentially other energy efficiency offerings to customers in those jurisdictions. Please check the PEPCO website frequently for information updates on new programs to help you save money and energy.

How does Energy Wise Rewards work?

When you enroll, we'll connect an indoor Energy Wise Rewards programmable thermostat to your central air conditioning unit. On selected days from June through October, participating air conditioners will automatically cycle to help balance the region's demand for electricity.

These events are known as Energy Wise Rewards "conservation periods". The more participants there are in the program, the greater the likelihood of reduced duration for any single conservation period. Energy Wise Rewards works best when it is truly a community-wide effort.

What is "cycling"?

When energy demand is approaching a critical point, your device will receive a radio signal that will put your A/C compressor into a "conservation mode". What that means is, for instance, if you elect 50% cycling, your

compressor will operate half the time it did during the hour prior to the conservation period.

What choices are available to me when I join Energy Wise Rewards?

The technological device HOC will install for your participation, and (2) the degree of cycling to which you can comfortably commit and its financial compensation.

Technology – HOC will participate in the indoor installation of a programmable thermostat, and NOT the outdoor installation of a DCU.

Cycling Level & Incentives – Choose 50%, 75% or 100% cycling.

50% cycling – Your compressor will run half the time it did during the hour prior to the conservation period. Receive an immediate \$40 installation credit, plus \$40 in bill credits prorated for each month of the cooling season for June through October.

75% cycling – Your compressor will run 25% of the time it did during the hour prior to the conservation period. Receive an immediate \$60 installation credit, plus \$60 in bill credits prorated for each month of the cooling season for June through October.

100% cycling – Your com-

pressor will not run at all during the conservation period. Receive an immediate \$80 installation credit, plus \$80 in bill credits prorated for each month of the cooling season for June through October.

What is a programmable thermostat?

An Energy Wise Rewards programmable thermostat is a digital thermostat that allows you to adjust the temperature settings of your home according to a preset schedule that you choose. This can be done either manually or through an Internet connection. This differs from other programmable thermostats you can buy and install, in that it allows you to remotely adjust your home temperature settings from any computer virtually anywhere in the world.

During times of critical (or peak) electricity demand, your Energy Wise Rewards programmable thermostat will receive a radio signal to initiate a conservation period. The radio signal operates on a unique frequency and will not interfere with any other wireless devices in your home.



TOP TIP

"...depending on usage patterns and how effectively you program the thermostat, it is possible to save as much as 10% on home cooling and heating costs..."

Pepco Energy Wise Rewards Thermostat

Programmable Digital Thermostat

- You can program manually or remotely through the internet
- Save up to 10% annually off your cooling and heating costs
- Professionally installed at no additional cost to you





At Night...Don't Let the Bed Bugs Bite

Bed Bugs At A Glance

- Bed bugs are small, oval, non-flying insects that feed by sucking blood from humans or animals.
- Bed bugs can live in any area of the home and can reside in tiny cracks in furniture as well as on textiles and upholstered furniture. They tend to be most common in areas where people sleep and generally concentrate in beds, including mattresses, box springs, and bed frames.
- Bed bugs are most active at night and bite any exposed areas of skin while an individual is sleeping. The face, neck, hands, and arms are common sites for bed bug bites.
- A bed bug bite is painless and is not noticed. Small, flat, or raised bumps on the skin are the most common sign; redness, swelling, and itching commonly occur.
- Typically, no treatment is required for bed bug bites. If itching is severe, steroid creams or oral antihistamines may be used for symptom relief.
- Fecal stains, egg cases, and exuviae (shed skins) of bed bugs in crevices and cracks on or near beds are suggestive that bed bugs may be present, but only observing the bugs themselves can confirm an active infestation.
- A professional pest-control company may be required to help identify and remove bed bugs from the home.

What are bed bugs? What do bed bugs look like?

Bed bugs are small, oval, non-flying insects that belong to the insect family *Cimicidae*, which includes three species that bite people. Adult bed bugs reach 5-7 mm in length, while nymphs (juveniles) are as small as 1.5 mm. Bed bugs have flat bodies and may sometimes be mistaken for ticks or small cockroaches. Bed bugs feed by sucking blood from humans or animals. Adult bed bugs are reddish brown in color, appearing more reddish after feeding on a blood meal. Nymphs are clear in color and appear bright red after feeding. The wings of bed bugs are vestigial, so they cannot fly.

Where are bed bugs found?

Bed bugs were common in the U.S. before World War II and became rare after widespread use of the pesticide DDT began in the 1940s and 1950s. They remained

prevalent in other areas of the world and, in recent years, have been increasingly observed again in the U.S. Increases in immigration and travel from the developing world as well as restrictions on the use of stronger pesticides may be factors that have led to the relatively recent increase in bed bug infestations. While bed bugs are often reported to be found when sanitation conditions are poor or when birds or mammals (particularly bats) are nesting on or near a home, bed bugs can also live and thrive in clean environments. Crowded living quarters also facilitate the spread of bed bugs.

Bed bugs can live in any area of the home and can reside in tiny cracks in furniture as well as on textiles and upholstered furniture. They tend to be most common in areas where people sleep and generally concentrate in beds, including mattresses, box springs, and bed frames. They do not infest the sleeping surfaces of beds as commonly as cracks and crevices associated with the bed frame and mattress. Other sites where bed bugs often reside include curtains, edges of carpet, corners inside dressers and other furniture, cracks in wallpaper (particularly near the bed), and inside the spaces of wicker furniture. Since bed bugs can live for months without feeding, they can also be found in vacant homes.

How are bed bugs spread?

Bed bugs live in any articles of furniture, clothing, or bedding, so they or their eggs may be present in used furniture or clothing. They spread by crawling and may contaminate multiple rooms in a home or even multiple dwellings in apartment buildings. They may also be present in boxes, suitcases, or other goods that are moved from residence to residence or from a hotel to home. Bed bugs can live on clothing from infested homes and may be spread by a person unknowingly wearing infested clothing.

What is the treatment for bed bug bites?

Typically, no treatment is required for bed bug bites. If itching is severe, steroid creams or oral antihistamines may be used for symptom relief. Secondary bacterial infections that develop over heavily scratched areas may require the use of antibiotics.

What are the symptoms and signs of bed bug bites?

Bed bugs bite and suck blood from humans. Bed bugs are most active at night and bite any exposed areas of skin while an individual is sleeping. The face, neck, hands, and arms are common sites for bed bug bites. The bite itself is painless and is not noticed. Small, flat, or raised bumps on the skin are the most common sign; redness, swelling, and itching commonly occur. If scratched, the bite areas can become infected. A peculiarity of bed bug bites is the tendency to find several bites lined up in a row. Infectious disease specialists refer to this as the "breakfast, lunch, and dinner" sign signifying the sequential feeding that occurs from site to site.

Bed bug bites may go unnoticed or be mistaken for flea or mosquito bites or other types of rash or skin conditions, since they are difficult to distinguish from other bites. Bed bugs also have glands whose secretions may leave odors, and they also may leave dark fecal spots on bed sheets and around their hiding places (in crevices or protected areas around the bed or anywhere in the room).

Bed bugs have not been conclusively proven to carry infectious microbes. However, researchers have implicated bed bugs as possible vectors of American trypanosomiasis ([Chagas disease](#)), and studies are ongoing to determine whether bed bugs may serve as disease carriers.

What about prevention of bed bug bites?

Avoidance of infested areas is the method for prevention of bed bug bites. Recognition of bed bug infestation and proper treatment of affected rooms (usually with the help of a pest-control specialist) is the best way to prevent bed bugs in the home. Those concerned about the potential for bed bug bites in hotels should examine hotel beds and mattresses for signs of a bed bug infestation. Sealing your mattress in a bed bug prevention casing can be beneficial.

At Night... Don't Let the Bed Bugs Bite (continued)

How do I detect a bed bug infestation in my home?

You can look to see if you can identify the fecal stains, egg cases, and exuviae (shed skins) in crevices and cracks on or near beds. You should also look at other areas such as under wallpaper, behind picture frames, in couches and other furniture, in bedspings and under mattresses, and even in articles of clothing. While fecal stains and skin casts suggest that bed bugs have been present, these do not confirm that the infestation is still active. Observing the bed bugs themselves is definitive confirmation that an area is infested. You may require professional assistance from a pest-control company in determining whether your home contains bed bugs.

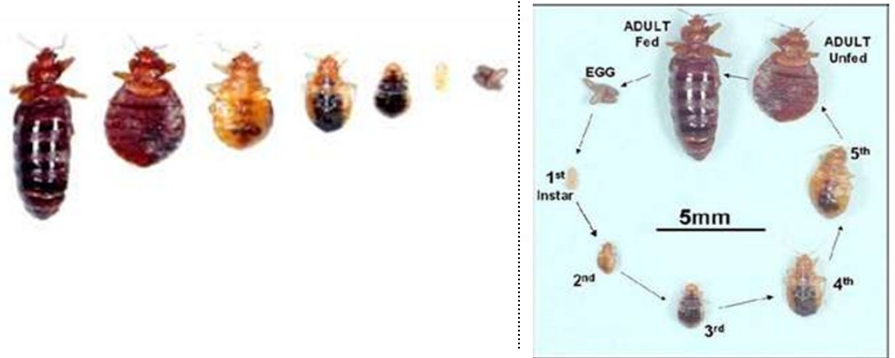
This information was provided by MedicineNet.com

For more information please visit the following websites:

http://www.medicinenet.com/bed_bugs/index.htm

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bedbug>

7 STAGES OF THE BED BUG



SIGNS OF BED BUG INFESTATION



Annual Inspections

All annual inspections will be completed by the end of May 2011. The purpose of an annual inspection is to review the general condition of the unit and determine if any maintenance is required. If repairs are necessary, a property staff member will complete the repairs during the visit or in a return visit. A note will be left each time service is provided to the unit. Keep in mind, if the damage has been caused by a resident or their guests, the charges for the repair will be billed back to the resident.

Items checked during annual inspection include the following but are not limited to this list.

1. Appliances
2. Cabinets
3. Caulking
4. Doors
5. Electricity
6. Flooring
7. Hardware
8. HVAC
9. Plaster problems
10. Plumbing
11. Smoke detectors
12. Venetian/blinds/shades
13. Windows





Concerned about Mold?

Why is mold growing in my home?

Molds are part of the natural environment. Outdoors, molds play a part in nature by breaking down dead organic matter such as fallen leaves and dead trees, but **indoors, mold growth should be avoided.** Molds reproduce by means of tiny spores; the spores are invisible to the naked eye and float through outdoor and indoor air. Mold may begin growing indoors when mold spores land on surfaces that are wet. There are many types of mold, and none of them will grow without water or moisture.

Can mold cause health problems?

Molds are usually not a problem indoors, unless mold spores land on a wet or damp spot and begin growing. Molds have the potential to cause health problems. Molds produce allergens (substances that can cause allergic reactions), irritants, and in some cases, potentially toxic substances (mycotoxins). Inhaling or touching mold or mold spores may cause allergic reactions in sensitive individuals. Allergic responses include hay fever-type symptoms, such as sneezing, runny nose, red eyes, and skin rash (dermatitis). Allergic reactions to mold are common. They can be immediate or delayed. Molds can also cause asthma attacks in people with asthma who are allergic to mold. In addition, mold exposure can irritate the eyes, skin, nose, throat, and lungs of both mold-allergic and non-allergic people. Symptoms other than the allergic and irritant types are not commonly reported as a result of inhaling mold. For more detailed information consult a health professional. You may also wish to consult your state or local health department.

How do I get rid of mold?

It is impossible to get rid of all mold and mold spores indoors; some mold spores will be found floating through the air and in house dust. The mold spores will not grow if moisture is not present. Indoor mold growth can and should be prevented or controlled by controlling moisture indoors. If there is mold growth in your home, you must clean up the mold **and** fix the water problem. If you clean up the mold, but don't fix the water problem, then, most likely, the mold problem will come back.

Ten Things You Should Know About Mold

1. Potential health effects and symptoms associated with mold exposures include allergic reactions, asthma, and other respiratory complaints.
2. There is no practical way to eliminate all mold and mold spores in the indoor environment; the way to control indoor mold growth is to control moisture.
3. If mold is a problem in your home or school, you must clean up the mold and eliminate sources of moisture.
4. Fix the source of the water problem or leak to prevent mold growth.
5. Reduce indoor humidity (to 30-60%) to decrease mold growth by: venting bathrooms, dryers, and other moisture-generating sources to the outside; using air conditioners and de-humidifiers; increasing ventilation; and using exhaust fans whenever cooking, dishwashing, and cleaning.
6. Clean and dry any damp or wet building materials and furnishings within 24-48 hours to prevent mold growth.
7. Clean mold off hard surfaces with water and detergent, and dry completely. Absorbent materials such as ceiling tiles, that are moldy, may need to be replaced.
8. Prevent condensation: Reduce the potential for condensation on cold surfaces (i.e., windows, piping, exterior walls, roof, or floors) by adding insulation.
9. In areas where there is a perpetual moisture problem, do not install carpeting (i.e., by drinking fountains, by classroom sinks, or on concrete floors with leaks or frequent condensation).
10. Molds can be found almost anywhere; they can grow on virtually any substance, providing moisture is present. There are molds that can grow on wood, paper, carpet, and foods.

Information Source EPA Website: <http://www.epa.gov/mold/moldguide.html>

Top Tip:

Use the exhaust fan in the bathroom to avoid moisture build up.

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION

OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY MD

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Gaithersburg, MD 20877

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