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## **Save Energy—and Money—in the Laundry Room** *by Saskatchewan's Office of Energy Conservation*

Doing your bit to protect the environment and reduce greenhouse gas emissions pays off in lower monthly energy bills. One Saskatchewan Research Council study found that adopting conservation and efficiency measures in existing Saskatchewan houses can lower energy consumption by as much as 40 percent. That can mean hundreds of dollars in savings every year.

One area where energy can be saved is in the laundry room, and some moneysaving measures will cost you nothing.

Since heating water is the second-largest energy demand in the home, many consumers are switching to cold-water detergents and using cold water to wash clothes. Using cold water will save 80-90 percent of the energy costs involved in washing laundry. Cold-water washing is also easier on clothes.

At a minimum, use warm water rather than hot in the wash cycle and cold in the rinse cycle. And avoid buying clothes with labels that say "Wash Separately", since extra water and energy is required to maintain these garments.

Another no-cost way to save energy in the laundry room is to hang-dry clothes. An outdoor clothesline is ideal. However, drying clothes inside in the winter months adds humidity to the air, which tends to be overly dry in the winter.

If it is time to purchase a new washing machine, a front loader saves water and energy compared to a top-loading machine. Although front loaders used to be more expensive than top loaders, they have become more affordable in recent years.

Why are front loaders more energy efficient?

Instead of an agitator, which has to work against the pressure of the water in the top-loading machine, front loaders rely on the force of gravity to agitate clothes. They use 40 percent less water and 50% less energy than top-loading machines and extract more water during the spin cycle. This saves energy when a clothes dryer is used and reduces drying time.

A front loader is also easier on your clothes, cleans them better, and uses less soap.

The EnergyStar® symbol displayed alone or as part of the EnerGuide label on appliances, helps you identify appliances that are the most energy efficient in their class. EnergyStar®-qualifying washing machines will be the most economic to operate because they use about 50% less energy per load than other clothes washers. In Saskatchewan, they are also exempt from PST.

Other features to look for when buying a clothes washer include temperature controls that allow you to choose hot, warm or cold water, and a water-level control switch or a small-load basket, either of which allows you to use less water for small loads.

If you always do small loads, consider a compact clothes washer. These units generally use less energy per cycle and have lower energy-use ratings than full size units. On the other hand, using a compact unit to wash larger quantities of clothes will increase energy costs, since you will end up doing more loads of laundry.

Whatever type of washer you use, reduce energy consumption by washing only full loads whenever possible and by adjusting the water level accordingly if you do wash a partial load. And don't forget to level your clothes washer; an unleveled machine works harder, wearing out parts before their time.

If you do use hot or warm water to wash clothes, remember that you can reduce laundry-related energy use by insulating your water heater and insulating the water lines that connect your clothes washer to your water heater. An inexpensive, do-it-yourself insulation kit is available at most home centres. Adding a standard \$50 kit can cut water heater standby losses by more than half and pay for itself after about one year of use. To learn more about insulating your water heater and water pipes, visit the Office of Energy Conservation web site - <http://www.oec.ca> - and search for water heater.

The Office of Energy Conservation is a resource for information on cost-effective energy conservation initiatives and practices for Saskatchewan. For more ideas on saving money through energy efficiency, visit the OEC website at [www.oec.ca](http://www.oec.ca) or call the OEC Hotline at 1-800-668-4636.