

## Standby Power

### Why we care

Did you know your television is using power, even when it's turned off? Did you ever wonder how much electricity it takes to power the digital display on your microwave or to keep your computer "hibernating?" About 40 percent of the electricity used to power home electronics is consumed while they are in standby mode. Sometimes called "phantom energy" or "leaky electricity," this consistent draw is a small but growing portion of total home electrical use. According to the US Department of Energy, the percentage of phantom power could rise to 20 percent by 2010.

The largest users of standby power are cable boxes, computer monitors, televisions, and stereo systems. Other culprits include garage door openers, answering machines, and the digital displays on DVD players and microwaves. Additionally, most plug-in chargers that come with cell phones, laptops, digital cameras, and music players draw power whenever they are plugged into an outlet, even when they are not in use.

### Simple, positive change

- Use power strips for several components and switch to "off" at the end of the day. Or, for convenience, install on/off switches on cords of equipment.
- Unplug battery chargers when not in use.
- Avoid purchasing products with extra bells and whistles you don't need and look for Energy Star models that use less energy.

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