

EARTH DAY – Time to reflect and take action

Forty years after the first Earth Day was organized, our planet is at grater risk then ever. Climate change is a huge challenge for mankind, which is vigorously trying to tackle the arising issues. Earth Day is a symbol of this struggle and it is a great opportunity for people, companies, organizations and governments to join in together and work towards creating a ‘greener’ living and working environment. More than billion people in 190 countries will take an action on April 22, 2010. Thus we all should be part of the Earth Day!

Everyone’s effort is important. From adopting new environmental laws by the governments, through using new technologies, to simply switching off the light in the house, each and every one of us can make a contribution towards the protection of the planet. Wasteful usage of energy leads to increased energy costs and pollution. Because implementing energy efficiency leads to lower energy costs and less pollution it is highly important to promote energy efficiency measures that each household can and should apply. In this way all of us contribute to the global fight of protecting our environment, making the world a better place for the future generations.

These measures include:

1. *Replacing old windows with new energy efficient windows.* Energy efficient windows contribute not only for decreasing of the costs for heating but also for increasing the comfort in the living space. This is highly important as the loss of heating through windows (when they are closed and when they are opened) makes up more then 50% of the overall heating loss of the building.
2. *Using roller blinds.* Roller blinds can help a lot in saving energy in the home. In winter shades and roller blinds should be used during the night to stop the loss of heating in the house. Some roller blinds can decrease the loss of heat up to 10%. In summer, external roller blinds can decrease the temperature inside the home for up to 8°C. Thus the need to cool the rooms in some cases is decreased and in some even unnecessary.
3. *Thermal isolation.* To be in line with the new building regulations and the advanced recommendations for energy efficiency all facades of buildings must be thermally isolated. Thermal isolation decreases the loss of heat during winter time and overheating during summer time.

Also it is more suitable; it protects the building from atmospheric influences and contributes to the protection of the environment. Good knowledge of the heating characteristics of building materials is a necessary precondition when building energy efficient buildings.

4. *Heating from Renewable Energy Sources.* New energy sources of heating are slowly becoming available on the market. New technologies range from sun collectors, through biomass to geothermal heating pumps. With the increasing of the electricity prices switching to alternative sources of heating is necessity - more economical, energy efficient and good for the environment.
5. *Efficient usage of household’s electric appliances.* The process of learning how to efficiently use the appliances in the house starts very early. It is a highly important task because the financial savings are big and as with the other activities it also contributes to the cleaner and safer environment. When buying new appliances like refrigerators, washing machines or ovens, the main criteria should not be only the price but also their electricity consumption. Therefore paying attention to the energy efficiency classification is highly important. Home appliances labeled as class A or A+ spend less electricity than the ones labeled with B or C. With the growing electricity prices, these relatively small details can make a significant impact on the home budget.
6. *Efficient usage of water.* Throughout the country most of the water is heated with electricity since natural gas is unavailable for households. Therefore implementing measures that decrease the electricity bill should be adopted. Heating the water at night when the price of electricity is lower; regular cleaning of the boilers from water scale which is known to interrupt the transmission of heat to the water; then making sure the tab does not leak as this causes loss of water enough for approximately 16 showers per month; are just some of the measures that each household can easily apply and with that not only save money but also decrease the uneconomic usage of water and electricity.

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