NIH GREEN ZONE NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter of the NIH Environmental Management System

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Save Resources Over the Holidays

We've reached December and that means the end to another year! It also means that many of us will be taking leave in the near future, whether for the holidays, use-or-lose, travel or any number of other reasons. This is a common time of the year to have reduced staff in the office or lab, especially with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to go through a small checklist of actions related to energy and water use before you take leave for an extended period, since it may be hours or days before anyone else visits your workspace again. This is especially true for your home workspace since nobody else is likely to be there until you return from leave. Here are a few things to check before you leave your lab, office or home for the holidays!

Lab:

- **Check all faucets and water baths to ensure they are turned off.** Water baths can be started again by whomever needs it next, rather than leaving it on when nobody is actively using it. A leaky faucet can waste over 50 gallons per week if left unnoticed.[1]
- **Perform preventative maintenance on your ULT freezers.** Preventative maintenance is required for all ULT freezers twice per year. Performing this maintenance before the holidays will help save energy and will also give you added peace of mind while away from the lab.
- **Turn off instruments that will not be needed.** With less personnel in the lab, some instruments may not be needed for the immediate future. It is prudent to turn off this equipment or utilize any energy saving features available.

Office:

- **Check break room appliances and unplug any that are unneeded.** Items like coffee makers and microwaves can be unplugged to reduce phantom plug loads (energy used by equipment while turned off and plugged into an outlet). Printers and other office equipment can be turned off or unplugged as well.
- **Turn off the lights.** A flick of the light switch is an easy way to save energy. The NIH has performed many upgrades to the on-campus lighting systems, such as adding motion sensors and replacing old fixtures with LED alternatives. Even with these upgrades, a few kilowatt hours of energy here and there can add up to a significant savings across an entire campus.

Home:

- **Turn down the thermostat.** Just like in the office, turning down your thermostat can decrease energy use. The energy savings are much more significant in the home setting, since you can lower the HVAC needs for the entire building, rather than a single office.
- **Turn off your computer and monitor (and any other electronic devices).** Ensuring that your computer is turned off will greatly reduce its energy consumption versus being left on. The same is true for your monitor, TVs and other electronics, especially if they are older models that lack energy-saving features.
- **Check that all windows and doors are closed.** A partially open window or a drafty door can greatly drop the temperature within your home, causing greater HVAC and energy use. Make sure all windows and doors are tightly shut before leaving and plug any spots that may be causing cold drafts.

SPOTLIGHT

The New NEMS Website

The NEMS website has received a makeover while being migrated to a new SharePoint platform. We hope these changes make the site easier to use and we look forward to more changes in the future.

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TAKE ACTION

The Waste Management Hierarchy

The NIH uses a hierarchy to determine the preferred methods for waste management. The base of the hierarchy consists of reducing waste and reusing items, followed by recycling in the next tier.

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NEMS TRAINING

Did you know? You can save 10% on heating and cooling costs each year by setting your thermostat 7°F higher (for cooling) or lower (for heating) than the normal set temperature.[1] To learn more about energy conservation at the NIH, please visit the NEMS Training webpage to view a short (20 minute) NIH environmental awareness training video.

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