Energy Essentials E-Tips

Lights Out

"I've heard it's better to leave the lights on in a room if you plan on returning within a short time because it takes more energy to power up the lights than to leave them on. True?"

Answer–In the past, leaving lights on was justified because the cost of energy was less than the cost of replacing a bulb. However, higher electricity costs and improved bulb technology have changed things. Recent studies show that turning lights off for more than 2-5 seconds will save more energy than will be consumed turning the lights back on. These studies take into consideration the in-rush current needed to start a lamp and the estimated life for both incandescent and fluorescent lights.

The exception is the High Intensity Discharge (HID) light, which can contain mercury vapor, high pressure sodium, and metal halide. These lights require several minutes to warm up and cool down when they're turned off. The "break-even point" where you begin to save on your energy bill is about 15 minutes with an HID light. This is the type of lamp used in the MSBO parking lot.

For more information contact:

Scott Little
slittle@msbo.org
517.327.2582

Rob De Boer
rcdeboer@iserv.net
616.334.4748

Michigan School Business Officials
1001 Centennial Way, Suite 200
Lansing, MI 48917
www.gomiem.org