



Earth Day Sustainability Tips

We're looking forward to another fun celebration of Earth Day. Here are some ideas for celebrating the holiday with the Saint Paul Public Schools community while you stay safe and observe social distancing recommendations.

With the increased amount of time that households are spending at home, many are seeing the impact to utility bills. We start off with some simple tips to safely take steps towards sustainability, then dive into some ideas for how to save energy in your everyday activities around the house.

And remember....

Care for your family. Care for your community. Care for the Earth.

Sustainability Made Simple



Celebrate Earth Day while social distancing! Images from public domain.

1. **Support renewable energy from your couch.** Supporting clean, local, renewable energy has never been easier. Signing up only takes a few minutes and the average Saint Paul household can cover 100% of its electricity for less than an additional \$10 per month. Join Windsource® today (xcelenergy.com/Windsource) or try the Renewable Advisor tool to discover the right renewable program for you at xcelenergy.com/Renewables.
2. **Keep your neighborhood clean.** Nature is an important resource that we want to preserve in Saint Paul. Next time you go on a walk consider bringing a bag to collect trash and help keep Saint Paul beautiful. Don't forget to wash your hands when you get back home!

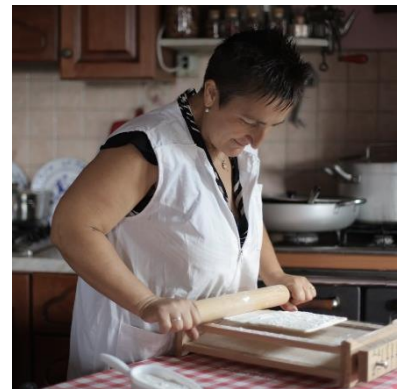
3. **Spread messages with sidewalk art.** We love sidewalk art! Create your own sidewalk masterpieces with chalk to share the messages of Earth Day and spread cheer and community. If you are caring for little ones, this is a great activity for them.
4. **DIY Energy improvements.** Now could be a good time to make some small DIY home changes to help improve your home's sustainability. Check out Xcel Energy's online store for free and discounted energy-saving items. Find low-flow showerheads, smart power strips, and smart thermostats among other things. poweredbyefi.org/xcelenergymn **The more you know!** Calculate your carbon footprint to learn more about how you use energy – and how you can save! www3.epa.gov/carbon-footprint-calculator
5. **Commit to one thing.** Helping the earth doesn't have to be hard. If you're not sure where to start, try taking on one thing. Maybe shorten your shower time once per week or pick up one piece of litter on your walk.

Energy Tips for Your Home

Many of us are still home more than we normally would be, all to keep our community safe. This Earth Day, commit to helping preserve our resources while staying safe at home.

Around the Kitchen

Spending time in the kitchen is often an important part of being home together. And spending time in the kitchen doesn't have to be a drain on Earth's resources. Here are some tips to help you save, whether you are cooking up a storm or heating up leftovers.



Tips for saving energy around the kitchen. Images from the public domain.

1. **Put a lid on it!** Seriously, covering your pots and pans with lids while you're cooking speeds up cooking time and keeps the heat where you need it most.
2. **Don't peek.** Opening the door of your oven can lower the cooking temperature by as much as 25 degrees Fahrenheit.
3. **Smart microwave.** When possible, use the microwave instead of the oven — it can use as much as 80% less energy. Plus, it's easier!

4. **Frozen savings.** That extra fridge in your garage or basement could be costing you \$100 or more annually in electricity costs. You can have it taken away for free – and earn a \$50 rebate. xcelenergy.com/Fridge
5. **Air 'em out.** Air dry dishes instead of using your dishwasher's drying cycle.
6. **Less flow more savings.** Low-flow water faucets can help reduce your hot water consumption, which can save energy. Get FREE low-flow attachments shipped to your house from poweredbyefi.org/xcelenergymn.

Keeping Comfy

We are all spending a lot of time in our homes now – and here are some ideas of how to stay comfortable while also conserving resources.



Tips for staying comfy at home. Images from the public domain and used with permission.

1. **Sleepy setbacks.** Your family might be home more – but you can still set your thermostat back while you're asleep. Try programming your thermostat back a few degrees overnight. A good rule of thumb is 1 degree per hour of setback, up to 8 degrees.
2. **Don't be blinded.** Use blinds to lower your home's electricity. In colder months, open your blinds to let light in in the day, and close them to prevent heat loss at night. In warmer months, do the opposite: close them during the day to keep your house cool.
3. **Celebrate Arbor Day.** Thinking of planting a tree? Plant one on your home's south side to block the summer sun and save on cooling costs. Plant one on your home's north side to block that cold winter wind.

DIY Energy Savings

Now may be a good time to tackle some items around the house to help save energy on this month's bills and in the future.



DIY Energy Savings. Photos used with permission.

1. **Get smart power.** It's important to have reliable electronics to help access education and services. But they don't have to be a big drain on your bills. Plug in electronics to a power strip to easily turn them off when not using. Even easier? Invest in a smart power strip to automatically turn off unneeded electronics. Find one today: poweredbyefi.org/xcelenergymn_
2. **Pipe up.** Insulate your pipes – especially those leading from your hot water tank to the rest of your home.
3. **Light up with LEDs.** If you still have inefficient incandescent or halogen lights in your house, now is a great time to replace those with LEDs. Order some today from your local hardware store or poweredbyefi.org/xcelenergymn.