

IN THE LOOP!

Free newsletter of MassRecycle, the Massachusetts Recycling Coalition

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Fight Vampire Power!

By Courtney Cann



These pointy-toothed misfits lurk in the night, sucking up energy and adding to your electric bill. What are we talking about? “Vampire power” consumption or “phantom loads” refer to electric power consumed by appliances while they are left in standby mode. Flat screen TVs, cable boxes and computers are never truly “off” until they are unplugged from the wall. Although the total power usage of one piece of equipment on standby may seem insignificant, their constant combined energy

consumption adds about \$140 a year to your electricity bill.

So which appliances are to blame for this waste of energy? Any device with a remote control or a digital clock is a likely vampire power consumer. Other devices, such as power adapters or cell phone chargers, may not have blinking lights or clocks but still suck up power while not in use. The worst culprits are game consoles, digital video recorders, computers and flat screen TVs. In fact, some plasma TVs can cost you \$160 a year while in standby mode.

Luckily, there are many ways to combat this waste of energy.

The most obvious solution is to unplug appliances when they’re not in use. A simple power strip will come in handy if you want to disconnect several appliances at the same time. Another solution is to search for the appliances’ “other” off switches. Some devices (such as desktop computers) may have a “soft” power switch in the front which turns the device on from standby mode—but it also has a real on/off switch in the back, usually close to the power cord.

If you’re in the market for new electronics, choosing [ENERGY STAR](#) qualified products can help you choose a product that wastes less energy. A more high-tech alternative to switching off appliances is the [Smart Strip](#). This power strip monitors the energy differences between the “main” appliance (usually a computer or a TV) and its peripherals and switches off accessories when the main appliance is not in use. Those looking for a larger-scale solution might be interested in a [GreenSwitch](#) which allows the user to switch off appliances all over the house in groups, or even by room. Perhaps something to think about during the holiday season.

This Halloween do what you can to fight vampire energy consumption. Because not all little vampires will go away if you give them candy.

Buy your ticket today!

2010 Recycling Awards & Wine Tasting

Wednesday, November 17, 5:30 - 9:00

Artists for Humanity EpiCenter

100 West 2nd Street, Boston

The ceremony will recognize the **11 BEST Recycling Programs in the State** in addition to presenting a special **Lifetime Achievement Award to Ben Harvey** of E. L. Harvey & Sons for his contribution to recycling in the Commonwealth.

The Celebration will include:

- Wine tasting from Turtle Creek Winery
- Silent auction
- Exhibit of art from reclaimed materials
- Live jazz trio
- Hors d'oeuvres and cash bar
- Networking
- Award ceremony

Get your ticket at

www.massrecycle.org/awards

\$25 in advance, \$35 at the door

Guests must be 21 or older per City of Boston regulation

Volunteers Needed

MassRecycle is currently looking for volunteers in the following areas:

- Newsletter writer
- Website editor
- Graphic designer
- Help with basic office needs
- Grant writer
- Photographer
- Other area where you can lend your talent

If you are interested in one or more of these opportunities, please contact MassRecycle at info@massrecycle.org or 617-338-0244.

Checklist: Green Halloween

By Shilpa Jacobie

Halloween is fun for both kids and adults from the costumes to the candy and decorations. At the end, however, we are often left with a lot of “stuff” that is not good for us or the environment. Here are some ideas for a greener and healthier Halloween:

- **Planning:** Plan ahead and you can save more than just time. Instead of the traditional trick or treating consider organizing a block party with healthier snacks and treats. Examples: toasted pumpkin seeds, stuffed dates and bell peppers, baked apples and carrot cake. Have party games that allow you to use recycled goods: making recycled paper hats, or building a scarecrow with old clothes, newspapers and markers, or a Halloween-themed puppet show using homemade puppets.
- **Trick or Tote:** If the kids must trick or treat, you can always talk to your neighbors to find out what kind of candy they will be giving out and then just stick to the homes that have healthier options or limit your kids to one piece of candy per home. For some really radical trick or treating, pick 3 or 4 neighbors’ homes where the kids can do one fun activity or eat one course of food at each house. Don’t forget to send the kids out with reusable or homemade trick or treat bags.
- **Treat happy:** Fight excessive candy consumption with healthy organic options (see examples above, plus raisins, pears, sweet potato chips, and butternut squash cupcakes) or feed the kids a healthy dinner before you send them out trick or treating. Try swapping trick or treating this year with a trip to a local farm to see how things are grown. It’s never too early to talk to your kids of about healthier food choices. Another great option is to give out non-food treats like coloring books; whistles, magnets or pencils made from recycled materials; soy crayons; and recycling-themed stickers.
- **Costumes:** Get the kids involved in making their own costumes or scour consignment stores (a great treasure hunt for kids and adults alike) for used costumes. Try the [Garment District](#) in Cambridge for an interesting array of adult costumes. A costume swap party could also be a fun away to exchange costumes from the previous year (if you still have them).
- **Décor:** There’s no reason not to decorate just because you want to go green. Using seasonal fruits like apples and pumpkins or fall leaves can probably ensure your decorations will be good all the way till Thanksgiving. Otherwise, try [fair trade decorations](#) and recyclable or reusable dinnerware. If you love using candles to enhance the eerie ambience, you might want to try the ones made from soy or beeswax.
- **When the treating is done:** If you stayed away from the five pound candy bags and tons of paper decorations, you won’t have much to clean up. But, just in case you ended with tons of candy wrappers, using them in art projects for your kids will make a fun activity. Then there are the costumes that you probably want to toss in the bin. Instead, swap them online at [thredup](#).
- **Happy Hallo-Green:** Take a look at some more cool [Green Halloween](#) tips for [Décor](#), [crafts](#), and [trick or treating](#).

About MassRecycle

MassRecycle is a non-profit statewide coalition that works to:

- **Strengthen local recycling programs,**
- **Educate businesses and the public** about sustainable practices,
- **Advocate for recycling** in the Legislature,
- **Reward recycling champions** by presenting annual awards.



Join us at www.massrecycle.org!

Celebrate America Recycles Day on November 15!



DO YOU?
GET INVOLVED >

America Recycles Day
11.15.10

Since 1997, communities across the country have come together on November 15 to celebrate America Recycles Day. More than a celebration, America Recycles Day is the only nationally recognized day dedicated to the promotion of recycling programs in the United States.

On and around November 15, all over the Commonwealth, America Recycles Day will be honored with fun and innovative events. Visit the [America Recycles Day Website](#) to enter your zip code and find events in your area – or register your recycling event on the site.

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