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Home Energy Briefs (HEBs)

RMI's Home Energy Briefs (HEBs) are a series of nine practical guides describing what the average homeowner can do to save energy (and money).

Home Energy Briefs

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Household Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Savings Measures

Even when no one's home, your household quietly emits greenhouse gases. A refrigerator is keeping your food cold, a furnace and/or air conditioner is keeping things comfortable, and even the little black boxes powering telephone answering machines, DVD players, shavers, and Dustbusters are constantly soaking up a little juice.

Surprisingly, heating and cooling aren't responsible for the largest household climate impacts. Appliances, lighting, and water heating account for the biggest part of your utility bills, hence emit the most carbon dioxide (see table). Remember that you're not merely paying an electric bill — you're also plugging into the power plant, and the more power (and money) you can save at home the more carbon dioxide you avoid emitting to the atmosphere.

CO₂ Emissions in an Average Single-Family Home

	Cost \$/yr	Energy 10 ⁶ Btu/yr	CO ₂ lbs/yr	CO ₂ percent
Space heating	\$476	68.1	8,829	33.9%
Air conditioning	\$105	13.6	1,882	7.2%
Water heating	\$202	27.8	3,558	13.7%
Refrigerator, freezer	\$146	18.9	2,607	10.0%
Cooking	\$46	6.5	825	3.2%
Other appliances	\$346	44.7	6,182	23.8%
Lighting	\$120	15.5	2,145	8.2%
Total	\$1,441	195.1	26,028	100.0%

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Household Energy Consumption and Expenditures 1993*, and RMI calculations (1999).

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