



## **THE CONSERVATION ZONE**

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### **Phantoms are Afoot in Ontario!**

If you've never heard of "phantom load," you're not alone. When you turn off an appliance, is it really off? Not always! From coffee-makers to televisions, many home electronics are not switched off completely until they are unplugged. These phantom energy robbers steadily suck and waste electricity from the electronics in our homes and offices. And they cost you more money on your monthly electricity bill.

Your home probably contains over 20 phantom loads: cell phone power adapters, televisions and DVD players—even doorbells. A simple test for a phantom load suspect—if the unit has been turned off for awhile, but still feels warm, it is likely stealing your electricity.

There are over 4 million Ontario households and phantom load accounts for an estimated six per cent of the average household's yearly electricity consumption. This is enough electricity to power a city larger than Hamilton.

Like most phantoms, phantom loads are easier to spot at night. Track them down by turning off all your lights and looking for the telltale glow of the tiny LEDs. You may be shocked by how many of these green- or red-eyed phantoms stare back at you!

Cutting the power to some electronics means resetting clocks and losing preprogrammed television channels. For other units, such as your stereo, DVD player or the battery charger for your laptop or phone, use a power bar. With one flick of a switch you cut the power to multiple units. Some new power bars make the job easier with wider spacing between outlets for bulky cell phone adapters, others even include built-in timers.

You have a choice. Pull the plug or flick the switch. Save money and conserve at the same time.

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