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Light the way to cost-effective renovations

Canadians love to renovate. In 2001, they spent more than \$20 billion on repairs and renovations— an average of \$2,580 for each homeowner. Given the amount of money involved, it's no surprise that Canadians seek maximum value for their renovation investments.

An ideal way to ensure that a renovation project generates long-term savings is to install energy-efficient lighting systems. A typical Canadian household spends an average of \$200 a year on electricity to power lights. Installing energy-efficient lights rather than standard incandescent bulbs— especially in areas where lights are left on for more than two to three hours per day— will cut these costs substantially.

The most efficient lighting systems rely on compact fluorescent lights (CFLs), long-lasting and cost-effective bulbs that can be used in virtually any fixture. Unlike incandescent bulbs, which waste up to 90 percent of their energy consumption generating heat, CFLs remain cool.

A single CFL, used for an average of three hours per day, will last up to 10 years and save approximately \$10 in annual electricity costs. Considering that the average Canadian home has 30 light bulbs, installing CFLs is an ideal way to reduce energy bills.

Opt for CFLs that carry the ENERGY STAR® symbol. ENERGY STAR is an international standard for energy efficiency. CFLs earn the ENERGY STAR symbol by meeting rigorous requirements for efficiency, longevity, colour rendition and light output.

To achieve further cost savings where CFLs will not be used, install controllers

such as dimmers, timers and motion sensors. These devices help ensure that lights are turned on only when needed.

By factoring the lighting requirements of your home into your renovation plans, you'll not only recoup your initial investment, but also save on electricity costs for many years to come.

Additional renovating tips

- Make sure that your contactor is familiar with energy-efficient lighting systems and can recommend design options that utilize products bearing the ENERGY STAR symbol.

- Determine lighting needs and desired effects before renovations begin. Plan to use brighter lights over work-spaces; install dimmer switches and low-wattage accent lighting for leisure areas.

- Use ENERGY STAR CFLs in rooms where lights are on for more than three hours a day, such as kitchens and family rooms. Since CFL bulbs last several years, they are also perfect for hard-to-reach places, such as over stairs and on high ceilings. Better still, opt for lights or fixtures that are designed specifically for CFLs.

The Government of Canada has issued the One-Tonne Challenge to all Canadians. It's a personal commitment to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by one tonne, or about 20 percent, per year. Choosing energy-efficient lighting can help you reach that goal.

For more information about CFLs and ENERGY STAR, or to learn how to reduce your energy bills, contact Natural Resources Canada's Office of Energy Efficiency (OEE) toll-free at 1 800 387-2000, visit oee.nrcan.gc.ca or energystar.gc.ca, or write to the OEE c/o S.J.D.S., Ottawa, Ontario K1G 6S3.

—News Canada

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