

CORKSCREW SWAMP  SANCTUARY & BLAIR Audubon
CENTER

Green Light, Go

by Amy Fleischer



If you could increase productivity and decrease your costs at the same time, would you do it? Of course! It's time to *light* the way.

Recent studies have shown that employees work longer and harder when they are in control of the level of lighting at their own work stations. Think of it as the Goldilocks syndrome: everyone's idea of "just right" is a bit different; and individuals are more likely to take responsibility for turning off their own lights when they leave (versus overhead lights). Replacing overhead lighting with task lighting can save you up to 15 percent on your lighting bill.

You can achieve similar savings by installing occupancy sensor room-lighting controls, which will automatically turn the lights on when someone walks in and turn them off when the person walks out. An efficiency study performed in Florida measured a 10 percent energy cost savings for commercial buildings that utilized this device; a joint study by the EPA and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute found that the greatest savings (up to 60%) were realized when the sensors were installed in the bathrooms!

Use Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs This is a no-brainer: Replace your incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent lights (CFL). A CFL uses 75 percent less electricity to produce the same amount of light as an incandescent bulb. And the CFL lasts for more than 10,000 hours, while the incandescent is only as good for up to 1,000 hours. By replacing a 100-watt incandescent with an equivalent 26-watt CFL, you can save more than \$90 per bulb in electricity costs over the lifetime of the compact fluorescent!

CFLs come in a range of sizes to fit almost any type of fixture, and in an array of styles -- including full-spectrum, which mimics natural sunlight. (Studies have shown that exposure to natural sunlight also improves worker productivity.) At major retailers, like Walmart and Target, a six-pack of 26-watt CFLs costs less than \$15.

Install LED Exit Signs Switch out your incandescent or fluorescent exit signs with LED exit signs. LED lights use up to 50 times less energy than incandescent bulbs, and will shine for up to 10 years. During this same time period, a fluorescent bulb may need to be replaced more than 6 times and an incandescent bulb more than 30 times.

LED exit signs also offer significant benefits to the health of your employees and the environment. A fluorescent light in just one exit sign contains more than 10 mg of mercury. To put this in perspective, 750 mg of mercury can contaminate over 1,000 fish to the point where they cannot be eaten.

LED exit signs retails for \$15-\$25, and you can calculate your savings potential at this EnergyStar site:

www.energystar.gov/ia/business/bulk_purchasing/bpsavings_calc/Calc_Exit_Signs.xls

Maintenance Matters

Make sure that bulbs, fixtures, lenses, lamps and reflective surfaces are cleaned regularly. By removing grease, dust, and other dirt, you can increase the output of your lights.

Bring It Home

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, “If every American home replaced just one light bulb with an **ENERGY STAR** qualified bulb, we would save enough energy to light more than 3 million homes for a year, more than \$600 million in annual energy costs, and prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions of more than 800,000 cars.” What more do you need to know? Switch to CFL today!

We’d Like Your Feedback

Let us know what you’d like our articles to focus on, and what has helped you the most: e-mail your topic suggestions and article feedback to rbeck@audubon.org and be entered to win two complimentary day passes to Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary.

Audubon of Florida’s Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary is a watershed system that is managed to maintain the native plants and animals and preserve the natural processes that have been occurring for thousands of years. The 13,000 acre property includes the last stand of virgin bald cypress trees existing in the United States. Visitors can enjoy the Sanctuary from a 2-1/4 mile boardwalk and expand their knowledge of ecosystems in southwest Florida at the Blair Audubon Center. Learn more at: www.corkscrew.audubon.org.