

## Beware of V-a-m-p-i-r-e P-o-w-e-r!

Vampire power is created by any appliance that continues to draw power when not in use, which, in the typical home, includes dozens of appliances ranging from the clock radio on your night stand to the computer in your home office. A couple of watts here, a couple of watts there are sucked away 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Seem scary?.....**it could be!!!**

Some household appliances are sneaky and draw power even when they are shut off. The source of that drain has been given any number of derogatory names, from vampire power to wall wart to phantom load. And like all vampires, this villain goes without notice -- until the electricity bill arrives at the end of the month.

Vampire power can best be spotted at night. Turn off all the lights and look around your home. Every appliance marked by an LED light, or anything else that glows, is drawing electricity. Not everything that leads to vampire power can be seen in the dark, however. Some must be felt. Cell phone chargers, for example, draw electricity when they are plugged in, whether they are connected to the phone or not.

Uncertain whether an appliance is drawing electricity? Try laying your hands on it. If it's an electrical item that's warm to the touch, it's using energy. Anything that must be reset after a power failure, or anything that operates by remote control (e.g., televisions, VCRs, etc.) draws electricity even when they are turned off. Even your doorbell is indirectly nickel-and-diming your electric bill.

Not all vampire power can be eliminated. For starters, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors draw vampire power but provide life-saving service. And although not a matter of life or death, unplugging other phantoms is not very practical. Most of us wouldn't think of cutting the power to our alarm clocks and then resetting them before bed each night. So even though not all vampire power is bad, we tend to forget about it and the energy/\$\$...it consumes.

The good news is that there are ways to stop being haunted by vampire power.

First, identify which electronic devices drain power when not in use, then unplug those that are turned off. And a very easy way to cut all power to multiple appliances at one time with one flip of the switch is use a surge protector or power strip. Finally when it is time to replace an electronic device, look for energy efficient models that waste less energy. So get ready to pick up your stake and take a stab at saving energy.....  
...and \$\$.

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