



# Practical Tips for Saving Electricity in Ethekeweni

Empowering Households and Businesses for a Sustainable Future

Ethekeweni, the bustling metropolitan region surrounding Durban, faces unique challenges regarding energy consumption. As electricity tariffs rise and the spectre of load shedding continues to loom, residents and businesses alike are searching for practical ways to reduce usage, lower costs, and contribute to a greener, more resilient city.

## Understanding Electricity Use in Ethekeweni

Before diving into tips, it's important to understand where most electricity is spent in a typical Ethekeweni home or business. The largest consumers are:

- Heating – including water geysers, space heaters, and underfloor heating
- Cooling – air conditioning and fans
- Appliances – fridges, freezers, ovens, stoves, and microwaves
- Lighting
- Electronics and standby power
- Pumps – pool, borehole, and irrigation systems

By identifying your main energy drains, you can prioritize which actions will have the greatest impact.

## Household Tips for Saving Electricity

### 1. Tame the Geyser

The hot water geyser is the single largest electricity consumer in most South African homes. Consider these tips:

- Install a geyser timer: Set your geyser to heat water only during peak usage times, such as early morning and evening.
- Lower the thermostat: Set your geyser to 55–60°C. Every degree lower saves electricity.
- Insulate the geyser and pipes: A geyser blanket and pipe insulation prevent heat loss, keeping water hotter for longer with less energy.
- Switch to solar water heating: The Ethekeweni climate is ideal for solar solutions, which can cut water heating bills dramatically.

### 2. Smarter Lighting Choices

Lighting accounts for a significant portion of household electricity use, but it's one of the easiest areas to improve.

- Switch to LEDs: Replace incandescent or CFL bulbs with LED alternatives, which use up to 80% less electricity.
- Take advantage of daylight: Open curtains and blinds during the day, and arrange workspaces to maximize natural light.
- Use task lighting: Illuminate only the space you need, such as a desk lamp for reading, instead of lighting the whole room.
- Turn off lights: Cultivate the habit of switching off lights when leaving a room.



### 3. Energy-Wise Appliances

Appliances can be silent energy hogs, especially older or inefficient models.

- Choose energy-efficient appliances: Look for the South African Energy Efficiency Label or international ENERGY STAR certification.
- Unplug when not in use: Many appliances draw 'phantom' power while in standby mode. Unplug chargers, TVs, and computers when not in use.
- Defrost freezers regularly: Frost build-up makes your fridge or freezer work harder, using more electricity.
- Use appliances wisely: Only run dishwashers and washing machines with full loads. Air-dry clothes when possible, and use cold water cycles for laundry.

### 4. Manage Heating and Cooling

Durban's humid subtropical climate means residents often rely on fans and air conditioners.

- Use fans before air conditioners: Ceiling and standing fans use a fraction of the power of air conditioning units.
- Set aircons to 24°C: Each degree lower increases consumption by around 5–8%.
- Seal gaps and insulate: Keep cool air in and hot air out with weather stripping around doors and windows, and by insulating roofs or ceilings.
- Close curtains or blinds: Keep sunlight out during the peak heat of midday to reduce cooling needs.
- Service units regularly: Clean filters and maintain your air conditioner or heat pump for optimal efficiency.

### 5. Water Pumps and Pools

Many homes in Ethekeweni have pools and garden irrigation.

- Run pool pumps efficiently: Limit operation to 4–6 hours per day, preferably outside peak demand periods.
- Use pool covers: Covers reduce water evaporation and retain heat, lessening the need for pump and heater use.
- Fix leaks: Both water and electricity are wasted when pumps run to make up for leaky systems.

### 6. Cultivate Energy-Saving Habits

No technology will save energy if not used wisely. Involve the whole family:

- Hold an 'energy audit' to identify wasteful habits.
- Challenge family members to see who can save the most electricity each month.
- Display your electricity meter where everyone can see and monitor usage.

## Beating Load Shedding with Smart Solutions

While saving electricity is vital, dealing with load shedding is a reality for Ethekeweni. Plan ahead:

- Invest in surge protectors to safeguard electronics.
- Use battery-powered LED lamps and solar lanterns for backup lighting.
- Install an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) for essential devices or computers.
- Consider solar panels and inverters to power critical loads.

## Community and Environmental Considerations

Energy saving in Ethekeweni goes beyond just reducing costs. Conserving electricity:

- Reduces air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from Eskom's coal-fired power plants.
- Helps stabilize the regional electricity grid, reducing outages and interruptions.



- Contributes to a sustainable future for all residents.

## Accessing Assistance and Incentives

Check with the Ethekeweni Municipality for possible:

- Rebates or incentives for installing energy-efficient appliances or solar water heaters
- Information on community educational programmes
- Updates on load shedding schedules and tips at the municipal website or via local radio

## Conclusion

Saving electricity in Ethekeweni is a shared responsibility and a practical necessity in the face of economic, environmental, and infrastructural challenges. By making smart choices—whether through quick fixes like switching off lights, bigger investments like solar panels, or community initiatives—everyone can play a part in building a brighter, more resilient future for Durban and its surrounding areas. Start small, stay consistent, and inspire others with your example. The collective impact can be transformative, benefitting not only your pocket but the planet as a whole.