Municipal Power News

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Phantom Loads:
What are they and how can I avoid them?

Though they might sound scary, phantom loads (also sometimes referred to as vampire loads) are easier to deal with than you may think. Phantom loads are created when appliances remain plugged into wall sockets even when they are not in use. Surprisingly, up to 10 percent of energy used in the average United States household is composed of phantom loads. That can add up over the course of a month, and result in hundreds of dollars a year—a thought that would make anyone scream with fright!

Phantom loads exist because people have become accustomed to their electronics starting up right away. For example, your TV still uses power even when it's off because it's constantly waiting for a remote-control signal. Other products may remain plugged into an outlet simply for convenience's sake, such as electronic instruments, amplifiers, stereos, chargers, appliances, and more.

One way to identify what products are using phantom loads is to invest in a Kill-A-Watt meter. It measures voltage, hertz, amps drawn, and watts and kilowatt hours used. Plug the appliance into the Kill-

IMPA Celebrates
10 Years of its Solar Program

With the goal to expand the diversity of its power supply portfolio with economically feasible renewable generation sites, the Indiana Municipal Power Agency (IMPA) launched its solar program to construct solar parks within its member communities in 2014. At the time, solar power was just emerging as a cost-effective fuel resource for utilities, but IMPA embraced the challenge of incorporating this resource into its power supply portfolio to further diversify its resources and prepare for the future. Now, 10 years and 50 solar parks later, IMPA is proud of the numerous accomplishments made through its solar program and the nearly 200 megawatts of power that it contributes to all 61 member communities served by the Agency.

IMPA began its program cautiously, only constructing three demonstration solar parks in Frankton, Rensselaer, and Richmond, Indiana in its first year. Each site was housed on about eight acres of land and with 4,000 solar panels, and by the end of the year, the three sites generated 1.5 million kilowatt hours.

Through this process, IMPA expanded its knowledge of solar power and the steps needed to successfully develop parks of this scale in the most cost-effective way possible. Besides relying on in-house expertise, IMPA worked with local contractors in each of the three member communities to keep costs down and support local businesses. When construction of the three solar parks came in under budget while reliably providing environmentally-responsible electricity, IMPA and its Board of Commissioners started to envision the vast possibilities of building solar in several member communities. A spark was lit, and by 2015, six more solar parks were constructed in member communities, adding over 9 megawatts (MW) of solar capacity to the Agency's power supply portfolio.

In the ensuing years, IMPA increased its renewable footprint by building solar in collaboration with its member communities. As time progressed, so did the Agency's proficiency in constructing solar parks. By 2017, IMPA was constructing each of its solar parks with a single-axis

tracking system, allowing solar panels at each site to effectively track the movement of the sun throughout the day and generate more electricity as a result. The program continued to expand with new solar parks being constructed in member communities throughout the state, as well as additional parks being added to some communities whose infrastructure were able to handle more than one solar park . With the help of this program, IMPA achieved at least 30% low or no carbon resources by 2020 while still offering some of the lowest wholesale electric rates in the state of Indiana.

The success of IMPA's solar program continues to thrive in recent years. In 2023, IMPA had its most prolific year yet for its solar park program as the Agency brought seven solar parks online in member communities. The agency's largest park – at 9.9 MW – was completed, and IMPA celebrated a milestone as the Agency's 50th solar park came online late in the year. From a small, idealistic program that started with three, 1-MW parks in 2014,

the Agency's solar park program has grown exponentially in under 10 years. The Agency now has over 196 MW of solar power in member communities. Plans are already underway for four additional parks, and the Agency expects to surpass 209 MW of solar capacity by the end of 2025. The solar park program plays a key role in IMPA's diverse power supply portfolio, and with its proven success rate, the Agency continues to provide a diverse fuel mix that benefits both consumers and the environment.•

IMPA's 50th Solar Park Ribbon Cutting

Reader Feedback

The **Indiana Municipal Power Agency** (IMPA) is a not-for-profit organization that provides a low-cost, reliable, and environmentally-responsible power supply to its members. IMPA provides this wholesale power to 61 communities in Indiana and Ohio, who collectively make up the Agency's membership.

What does having reliable electricity mean to you and your family?

?

Send your answer to newsletter@impa.com, along with your name, e-mail address, and address for a chance to win an energy efficiency prize pack!

Topic Survey

Is there more about your community that you would like to know? Do you have questions about how public power or your municipally-owned utility works? Would you like to learn more tips and tricks as to how you can improve your home's energy efficiency?

Reach out to newsletter@impa.com to suggest topics for future *Municipal Power News* newsletters and let us know what articles you enjoy most, and what you'd like to see next!

Phantom Loads

A-Watt and leave it for a minute. Once it displays the total kilowatt hours used for the appliance, multiply by your hourly rate to calculate the cost of the appliance's phantom load.

So how do you get rid of phantom loads? One way is to use power strips or smart strips. Plug appliances into a power strip with a switch and turn it off when the appliances are not in use. Smart strips sense when certain appliances are on or off and turn other appliances on or off depending on the status of the "primary" appliance. For example, you can plug your television into the main socket of the smart strip and plug all other related appliances into the other sockets (DVD players, gaming consoles, etc). When the television is off, the smart strip will turn off the other related

Car Show Upcoming!

Plans for the Annual Coatesville Car Show are developing as the summer gets closer! This year, the event is planned to take place on Saturday, July 20, with a rain date of July 27. Be sure to mark your calendars for this July and follow the Coatesville Car Show's social media page at www.facebook.com/coatesvilleindy to keep up with show updates!

appliances that would need the energy of the TV to use anyway. If your TV is off, there's no reason to have your DVD player on.

Timers also work to reduce phantom loads. They're less effective than smart strips and power strips, but they can still save you money. Put certain appliances on to a timer so that they turn off at times when no one will be using them (for example, between 12 am and 5 am).

Unfortunately, not all phantom loads can be eliminated. Things like washers, dryers, refrigerators, smoke detectors, thermostats, and alarm systems should be left on for safety, so don't be surprised if your meter still ticks away even when things are unplugged. •

What's the Word?
Investigating Power Terminology

Watt

A watt is a unit of measurement used to show the rate of energy transfer over one second of time. Consequently, a kilowatt is equal to 1,000 watts, a megawatt is 1 million watts, and a gigawatt equals 1 billion watts.

You may have heard of a kilowatt hour (kWh), which is a common billing unit used by most utilities in the electric industry. Essentially, a kWh simply shows the energy use per hour of an appliance, device, or entire home measured in kilowatts. For example, a space heater rated at 1.5 kWh consumes 1,500 watts of power in one hour of continuous use!

Watts are named after James Watt, an inventor and engineer born in 1736 who also created the concept of horsepower.

Cooking Corner

Meatloaf

Recipe submitted by Marcie of Richmond, Indiana

- 2 lbs hamburger
- 2 eggs
- 10 to 12 crackers (crumbled)
- 1 onion diced
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 cup milk
- 2 pkgs instant oatmeal
- 2 to 3 squirts of ketchup

Mix all ingredients well. Form into a loaf and put into a greased loaf pan. Cover with ketchup. Refrigerate for 20 to 30 minutes covered to help the loaf firm up. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Remove loaf from refrigerator and bake in preheated oven for 1 to 1 1/2 hours.

Once meatloaf is baked, remove from oven. Let rest on top of the stove for 30 minutes before cutting into so that it won't fall apart.

This recipe serves about 4 to 6 people. Invite your friends and family over to enjoy!
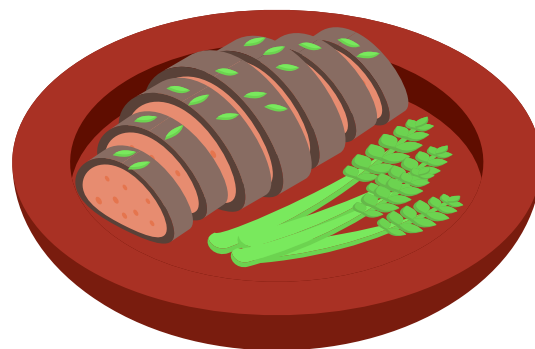
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What are the Benefits of Public Power?

In the last issue of the *Municipal Power News*, we asked you what some of the benefits of public power are. As a reader of this newsletter, you live in a public power community, which means the electric utility that serves your power needs is a not-for-profit utility, owned and operated by your municipality.

The benefits of public power are numerous. Here is what some of our readers had to say about the advantages of living in a public power community.

> "By being a part of the community, public power utilities can boost investment in the community, support local education, and be involved with charitable programs. They also care about the overall well-being of the communities they serve."
>
> – Fred

> "Since public utilities are nonprofit organizations, their main focus is on providing affordable services rather than maximizing profit. This often leads to lower rates for customers, as any surplus revenue is reinvested into the improvement and expansion of services. Public power also eliminates the need for shareholders and dividends, further reducing costs. Consequently, individuals and businesses can save money on essential utilities, allowing them to allocate their resources more efficiently."
>
> – Chris

> "There are many benefits to public power, such as being able to be provided with economic advantages. IMPA makes sure all electric needs of the community are met, as well. It boosts community investments, supports local education, and gets involved with beautification."
>
> – Bridgette

These are all great answers that highlight how public power improves your community to help it thrive. Additionally, public power is affordable. According to a 2021 American Public Power Association (APPA) comparison, public power customers of Indiana and Ohio typically saved an average of more than 40% when compared to other types of electric utilities. APPA also reports that nearly 80% of projects currently under construction by public power utilities are solar and wind generating sources. This shows that public power utilities also recognize the importance of environmental stewardship and continue to invest in sustainable power sources.

Public power communities, including yours, consistently work to provide low-cost, reliable, and environmentally-responsible power to their consumers.

To learn more about public power, visit www.impa.com/publicpower!

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REACH Alert Reminder

Coatesville officials understand the importance of accurate and timely communication regarding events affecting the community. Consequently, the town of Coatesville has initiated a notification service in collaboration with REACH Alert, an organization that specializes in mass communication. This notification system allows important information to be shared with the community in a matter of seconds through phone and email alerts, keeping everyone up to date on local occurrences, including waterline breaks, boil water advisories, road closures or delays due to construction or accidents, hazmat situations, AMBER alerts, Silver alerts, police actions, and civic events.

To register with REACH Alert, go to www.reachalert.com and click on My Account. Then select Create Account and follow the prompts given by the website. Be sure to type "Coatesville" when asked for the network name.

If you do not have access to a computer or if you experience any difficulty registering, please contact the Town Office at (765) 386-7205. •