

The big drain

Proposed new standards would cut energy drain

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You're conscientious enough to turn the lights off when you leave the house, but as it turns out, you've left something on. As long as they're plugged in, the big screen in your basement, the electric toothbrush in your bathroom — even your DVD player — are still drawing standby power as they wait in a state of semi-readiness for you to turn them back on. Over a year, that standby power

could amount to enough to run a refrigerator for a month. That's why the federal department of natural resources is proposing new regulations that will require CD and DVD players, televisions, answering machines and cordless phones to draw less than 1 watt from the grid on standby. The new requirements will be phased in gradually over the next couple of years, but when finally implemented could result in \$460 million in energy savings, equiva-

lent to taking 400,000 homes off the grid. "When you think that these things are not being used, but are actually using 30 watts, that's a lot," says Anne Wilkins, manager of the department's Energy Star and Energuide programs. In preliminary results, a consultant found that televisions could draw as much as 70 watts in standby mode, and that's why such products are being targeted first. "The amount of equipment that we're bringing into our house is growing, and the biggest energy in our load that's growing is standby power as a result of consumer electronics," Wilkins says. Consumers expect features such as instant on, she says. That "means that internal systems have to keep on working to ensure this feature."

Regulating standby power

The new requirements for maximum standby power will be proposed this year and in 2010. They'll have to go through the regulatory process, which includes consultation with consumers and manufacturers, before they're fully implemented.

Year amendment will be introduced	Maximum standby power	
	2008	2010
● CD player	2 watts	1 watt
● CD player with clock	4 watts	2 watts
● Television	3 watts	1 watt
● DVD players/recorders	3 watts	1 watt
● DVD players/recorders with clock	3 watts	2 watts
● Answering machine and cordless phones	No change	1 watt

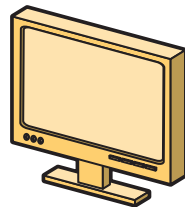
The department is also working on new energy standards that will make mid-efficiency furnaces obsolete and include standby power in energy ratings for dishwashers. To save standby power, unplug

battery chargers once your equipment is fully charged, plug all your electronics into a power bar that can be switched off easily, and look for Energy Star qualified products that use 50 per cent less power in standby mode.

What they draw

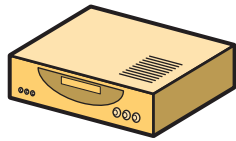
Results of a preliminary survey of Canadian consumer electronics found a wide variation of standby power for the same products.

TELEVISIONS



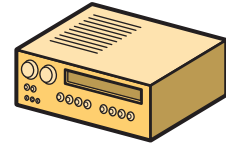
0.1 to 70 watts

CABLE BOXES



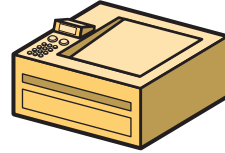
Less than 1 to 70 watts

INTEGRATED STEREO SYSTEMS



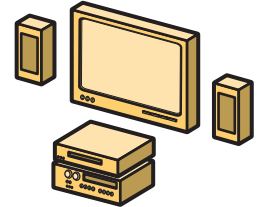
0.1 to 30 watts

PRINTERS



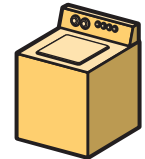
Less than 1 to 12 watts

HOME THEATRES



0.1 to 11 watts

WASHING MACHINES



Less than 1 to 4 watts