

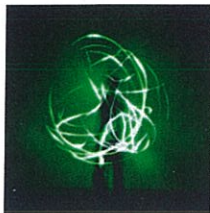
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## Energy saving tips: don't be left in the dark

Wednesday, 18th February 2009 by Rebecca Burn-Callander



Electrics can be a tricky and confusing subject for SMEs. If you're trying to reduce your carbon footprint but aren't sure where to start, here's a helping hand.

Even the smallest office can benefit from good electrical practice. Steve Allen, founder of London-based electrical engineering firm Electrica, has put together five bright suggestions for the small business.

### Lighting Schemes

Lighting schemes are becoming obsolete. More and more energy-efficient lighting has become available, negating the need for a "scheme".

Although T5 fluorescent lamps may be more expensive to purchase, the high output outweighs the cost of standard lamps. New lighting systems can reduce your energy usage by up to 40 per cent.

### Energy Saving Products

The demand for more energy-efficient products has meant that lamps have reduced in size and cost. One product that will save money and energy within the office is a PIR (Passive Infra Red) sensor. The PIR system works on a occupancy sensor: when someone moves within reach of the sensor, the light comes on. The only downside is that if an employee is working quietly for some time - and not moving - the light can turn off. You'll have to wave your arms about to catch the sensor again. Together with daylight dimming, however, these can bring great savings to an office environment.

### Regulations for the home-run business

Having your electrical equipment tested is vital to you and your employees' safety. Faulty equipment could start a fire. To avoid doubt have your appliances PAT tested every six months. Any new installations should also be tested by a competent qualified electrician. If you use your home as a business premises you need to have your items PAT tested.

### Brands

Use good quality materials and products. Although all cable may look the same, it can differ in price and quality. Good quality materials will last longer and be more efficient. Look out for the EU ratings and standards.

### Associated Trade Bodies

If you are thinking about having electrical work carried out, look for a company that carries a trade association badge. Trade associations such as the ECA work with companies that have been tested to a high standard and will comply with regulations and good practices. Choosing someone with this recognition will provide you with a guarantee on the standard of work and ensure all relevant paperwork is given. Visit [www.eca.co.uk](http://www.eca.co.uk) for more details.

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