

China Launches Energy Conservation Guide for Citizens

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China's Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) has [launched](#) a new energy conservation [guide](#) for citizens in an effort to promote the twin goals of saving energy and reducing emissions. The guide, printed on recycled paper, discusses 36 categories of household living where people can reduce their energy use, from housing and eating to commuting and laundry. For each category, it provides the amount of energy savings from taking specific actions as well as the associated reductions in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, based on a MOST study.



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The guide illustrates how small changes in lifestyle can lead to significant energy savings. For example, buying one less item of fashion clothing each year can save roughly 2.5 kilograms of coal equivalent and reduce CO₂ emissions by 6.4 kilograms. Other “green” tips include choosing energy-efficient washing machines and refrigerators, using [compact fluorescent light bulbs](#), developing solar power and methane energy in rural areas, and cycling or taking public transportation instead of driving. Consumers can also save energy by cutting back on drinking and smoking, the guide notes.

The energy savings would grow dramatically if one in every fifty Chinese—some 25 million people—made the effort to conserve, according to MOST. “China is a big country with a population of nearly 1.3 billion, and even a small change would become significant after multiplying it by the population,” says ministry head Wan Gang, who applauded the handbook. If every Chinese citizen took the full range of relevant actions to change their living behaviors, this would save the equivalent of some 77 million tons of coal each year and keep roughly 200 million tons of CO₂ out of the atmosphere, the handbook concludes.

The standard of living for most Chinese has increased rapidly as a result of double-digit [economic growth](#) in recent years, and the demand for energy to support larger living spaces, the use of electric appliances, and a desire for [material consumption](#) has also grown dramatically. In 2004, consumption-related energy use accounted for 24 percent of China's total, the equivalent of 530 million tons of coal and an increase of 9.9 percent from the previous year, [People's Daily](#) reports.

The Chinese government has set a goal of reducing the nation's energy use per unit of gross domestic product (GDP) by [20 percent](#) by 2010. In the first half of 2007, energy consumption per unit of GDP decreased by some 2.8 percent compared to the same period last year; however, electricity consumption per unit of GDP increased by some 3.6 percent, [according to](#) the National Bureau of Statistics.

The new handbook is a part of a nationwide campaign on energy conservation initiated by China's National Development and Reform Commission and 16 other government departments. It was launched last week on a high-profile television program broadcast throughout the country.

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