

# Industrial Sector

Manufacturing the goods we use every day consumes an enormous amount of energy. The industrial sector of the economy consumes about one-fifth of the nation's energy. In industry, energy efficiency and conservation are driven by economics—money. Manufacturers know that they must keep their product costs low so people will buy them.

Since energy is one of the biggest costs in many industries, manufacturers must use as little energy as possible. Their demand for energy efficient equipment has resulted in many new technologies in the last decades. Consumers can have an effect on industrial energy use through the product choices we make and what we do with the packaging and the products we no longer use.

## A Consumer Society

Not only is America a consumer society, it is also a 'throw away' society. Americans produce more trash than any other developed country. The average person throws away approximately 1,600 pounds of trash a year!

The best way for consumers to reduce the amount of energy used by industry is to avoid buying unnecessary products and to repair and reuse items wherever possible. Buying only those items you need, as well as reusing and recycling products, can reduce energy use in the industrial sector. The 4 R's of an energy-wise consumer are easy to put into practice. Managing waste saves money, energy, and natural resources, and helps protect the environment.

### Reduce

Buy only what you need. Buying fewer goods means less to throw away. It also means fewer goods are produced and less energy is used to manufacture them. Buying goods with less packaging also reduces the amount of waste and the amount of energy used.



### Reuse

Buy products that can be used more than once. If you buy things that can be reused rather than disposable items that are used once and thrown away, you save natural resources. You will also save the energy used to make them, and reduce the amount of landfill space needed to contain the waste. Savings also result when you buy things that are durable. They may cost more, but they last a long time and do not need to be replaced often, saving money and energy.



### Repair

Many people throw away products when they break and buy new ones. Many of these products could be easily and cheaply repaired. Always consider repairing a product before throwing it away. It saves energy, money, and natural resources.



### Recycle

Make it a priority to recycle all materials that you can. Using recycled material to make new products almost always consumes less energy than using new materials. Recycling reduces energy needs for mining, refining, and many other manufacturing processes.

Recycling steel saves 75 percent of the energy needed to make products from raw iron ore. Recycling aluminum cans saves 92 percent of the energy required to produce aluminum from bauxite. Many other products can also be recycled and contribute to savings in energy and resources.

Recycling is only part of the process to save energy. Consumers also need to make an effort to buy recycled goods. Many products now have labels that tell consumers how much recycled material they contain.



## Energy Sustainability

Efficiency and conservation are key components of **energy sustainability**—the concept that every generation should meet its energy needs without compromising the needs of future generations. Sustainability focuses on long-term actions that make sure there is enough energy to meet today's needs as well as tomorrow's.

Sustainability also includes the development of new clean technologies for using fossil fuels, promoting the use of renewable energy sources, and encouraging policies that protect the environment.