

Adapt Your Home to Climate Change – Prepare, Switch, Rethink, and Renew

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Ashland is taking action on climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from cars, homes, businesses, and city operations. In addition to reducing emissions, we need to protect our communities, residents, and natural ecosystems from ongoing and worsening impacts. The City of Ashland is promoting four main initiatives to help Ashland residents adapt their homes so they produce fewer emissions and increase preparedness – Prepare, Switch, Rethink, and Renew. Below are a few ways to get started, but there are many others on the website, so be sure and check out the following link and take climate action today!

<https://ashlandor.org/climate-energy/>

Prepare – Preparing your home for climate impacts, including heat waves, wildfires, smoke, floods, and drought is an important step in creating resilience. There are many things you can do to prepare! Here are three to get started with

(1) The City conducts FREE wildfire safety assessments to determine how to make your home less vulnerable to wildfire. This can include upgrades to building materials, managing vegetation, and removal of refuse and debris.

(2) Put together a disaster supply kit that has basic essentials such as food, water, first aid, and supplies for you, your family, and pets. The kit should be transportable for evacuations, but also contain enough supplies for shelter in place.

(3) Make sure you have a disaster plan in place for emergencies. All family members should know their role and pets also need to be included.

Rethink – Summer is the perfect time to focus on **making your home more efficient and resilient** in the face of more frequent drought. This year, we're all concerned about our water supply. So how can we do garden care with an eye to conservation of our precious water? The City of Ashland's website offers a great guide to **landscape watering** that will help prevent waste and keep your plants thriving. And while you're at it, it's also not too late to have the **efficiency of your irrigation system** checked. Using the right amount of water at the right time will save water and reduce the energy needed to power our water infrastructure. Efficient irrigation gets your plants the right amount of water just when they need it. Below are links to a sample watering guide, to schedule an appointment to have your irrigation system evaluated, and to several excellent resources to get the water saving job done:

<http://www.ashland.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=16219>.

<http://www.ashland.or.us/rebates> <http://www.ashland.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=1366>

Switch – Adapting our homes also includes **reducing greenhouse gas emissions** from yard care activities. This is the time we hear the frequent roar of leaf blowers, weed eaters, and lawn mowers. These devices contribute carbon emissions and air pollution when powered by gas engines. We can adapt our yards by **switching to electric powered yard tools**. Larry switched to electric mowing 10 years ago, and it's been 10 years since he had to fix a small engine or use gas and oil to tend his yard. Local stores sell a wide range of both plug-in and battery powered electric landscape tools from weed eaters to chain saws. Just last month, the arborist removing a dying tree from Larry's yard climbed the tree with his battery powered saw dangling from his belt. The tool was quiet and effective!

Renew – Replacing fossil fuels with **renewable energy** moves us all toward net zero emissions. At the global level, emissions must be reduced **10-15% each year** to prevent catastrophic climate change. The good news is that renewable energy options are growing quickly in Ashland! The city offers rebates for the **installation of solar panels** on homes and businesses (in addition to state and federal rebates). The city also offers wholesale prices for purchasing any surplus energy produced. But for renters and/or those without appropriate roofs for solar installation, **community solar and the new solar cooperatives** are innovative ways to for anyone to save money on energy and reduce emissions. This was made possible by the City’s adoption of “virtual net metering”, which allows city utility customers to share energy production in locations other than their primary home.

Ashland residents have always been actively engaged in sustainability and conservation. This summer is a great time to take the next step and adapt your home, reduce emissions, and become more prepared for impacts. We’re all safer when we band together, so **reach out to your neighbors** to create even greater community resilience.