

Monitoring FAQs

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What is monitoring?

One of the most important and often overlooked stages of becoming less dependent on non renewable energy systems is to look at how we consume energy, and how we can make any energy consumption we do have as minimal as possible.

Why monitor?

Why should you use any monitoring device? The answer is to attain a more energy efficient home. There is little point in investing in any type of renewable energy unless you have already looked at the way in which you, as an individual or a household, use your energy. A prime example of this would be installing photovoltaic panels without previously looking at ways in which you can reduce your dependency on the national grid. Monitoring also allows you to check your consumption with your utility bills suppliers.

What can I monitor?

Electricity monitoring

There are two forms of monitoring your electricity consumption; the first of these is one that monitors your entire electricity consumption. You can then try different ways in your home to try and lower this figure; the other type of monitor for electricity is one that plugs into the individual device, simply by placing it in-between your device and the socket you can work out the efficiency of that particular device. With this second type of monitoring system you can make informed decisions as to whether to replace certain outdated devices before installing a renewable energy system.



Once you have installed your meter there are lots of things you can try to get your energy consumption down, see how much the following things make a difference to that consumption.

- ★ **Try changing light bulbs to energy saving bulbs**
- ★ **Use a washing line whenever possible instead of a tumble dryer**
- ★ **Switch off 'standby devices' at the plug**
- ★ **Upgrade your old fridge/freezer**

Remember, every watt of electricity saved, is one that doesn't have to be generated (or paid for!)

Water monitoring

Water is a scarce natural resource; droughts and publicity on climate change have concentrated all our minds on the need to reduce our demand for water. Metering saves water and may result in lower bills for many customers, saving money as well as helping the environment.

Once you have had a water monitoring system installed you should try different ways to try and bring your water consumption down.

See how these ideas effect your water consumption.

- ★ **Switch from baths to showers**
- ★ **Fit dual flush toilet systems, (or place a brick in your cistern)**
- ★ **Use your dishwasher less or wash by hand**
- ★ **Turn your tap off whilst brushing your teeth**



Heat monitoring

Monitors are now available to show all the areas in your house and their relative heat loss. By using infra-red thermal cameras it is now possible to pinpoint exactly which areas of your house are heat efficient and which are not.

Once you have identified areas that lose heat in your home there are a few things you can try to combat this loss:

- ★ **Loft insulation**
- ★ **Cavity wall insulation**
- ★ **Double (and now triple) glazing windows**
- ★ **Sealants around window and door frames**
- ★ **Draught excluders around all doors and frames**



How can I monitor?

Electricity monitors are readily available from all electric wholesalers at reasonable prices. Water meters are often installed for free, just by contacting your water supplier, and infra-red thermal cameras may be hired for the amount of time you require from most electric wholesalers.

Is maintenance necessary?

There are very few maintenance issues with monitoring; a water monitor will be maintained by your water suppliers, wireless electrical monitors will require battery changes on average every six months, and you would only hire infra-red cameras for the amount of time you were using them.

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