



Energy Control



By Eleanor Rodgerson, MD

Problems, problems! What to do? Did I remember to turn off those lights? Is that tap leaking? Did you turn down the heat? Was that a waste of energy? Can I do better? Do energy companies help?

What is an energy company, anyway? What does it do?

I turned to the computer and learned there are some 15 million energy companies in the world. Close to home, one of them hired a relative at a salary that included enough for life in a high rent city and payment for some of the past student loans. Energy must be crucial.

Research revealed that an energy company may be large, or small, deal with private corporations, or work with government. It may specialize in petroleum, petrochemicals, lubricants, electricity, natural gas, nuclear operations, wind, sun, water, biomass, and so forth. It may number among the engineering consulting firms that aim to reduce the depletion of the world's natural resources. There may be audits of buildings - perhaps as far north as Alaska and as far south as the desert. Recommendations are made for saving money and making better use of it. California is noted for its national leadership in energy efficiency.

Take a building with windows that never feel the sun. Cold seeps through. What happens to the heating system? Suppose the windows catch the sun? What happens to the cooling system? Suppose there is an indoor swimming pool? What effect does its heat have?

Adjustments mean saving dollars for a company and making better use of its energy. It is up to the institution that ordered the audit in the first place to follow the suggestions an energy company makes, and improve.

Who does the work in these companies? Engineers, particularly civil and environmental, and they must be mathematicians as well.

Energy companies are using the world's energy in every way they can, using and preserving, substituting where possible. Effort is made not to waste it. Private and government institutions are both involved and, as energy companies have multiplied, so have the world's energy problems been corrected and sometimes abolished. A bright future for life on this earth ought to be assured.

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