

Message from Advise Guy Robert Talton



## The truth about plug-in energy-saving devices

Have you considered purchasing a plug-in energy-saving device? Recently, while performing an energy audit for a member, I noticed several of these devices plugged into outlets. I thought, does this really work? Can it help other members save energy? Do I need one in my home? The research began to help uncover the truth about these highly marketed energy-saving devices to learn if they work. With so many of these devices offered online, I immediately noticed a few high approval ratings and thought, could this be real or is it too good to be true?

The ads for these devices claim that you can plug it into the wall and magically reduce your electric bill. It claims to reduce dirty power or improve the power factor in the home and, in return, reduce energy use. The fact is, residential members and small businesses do not pay for power factor. Furthermore, power-factor correction does not affect real power (what you are billed for).



The devices are made with a small capacitor, electronic board and an LED, which does nothing to save energy. Actually, these devices could be better described as an expensive night light. Ads claim the more energy savers you plug in, the more you save. The devices use power, not save it. Companies use elaborate marketing schemes to make the devices look attractive. The names can change but the product

never does, nor do the energy savings.

I think the reason for some of the high approval ratings of these devices is because customers changed their habits, which resulted in savings. Some energy savings are due to lucky timing that coincides with reduced usage from milder outdoor temperatures. When the devices are plugged in, homeowners may sometimes start considering ways to save and become more conscious of their actions. While the device itself does not save, it's possible it could reinforce more efficient homeowner habits. There are many great ways to save in the residential setting that do not involve plug-in energy savers!

To save electricity, consider air sealing and insulation, having HVAC systems serviced and changing return air filters regularly. The best ways to save is to focus on air infiltration and space conditioning within the home. Other important factors are keeping appliances in good working order, using LEDs, and unplugging devices when not in use. For more energy saving advice, visit our website at [sremc.com/advise-guys](http://sremc.com/advise-guys), or call us at 910.892.8071.



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