

Nursing Homes



Energy Use – Nursing Homes

The health care sector including nursing homes and hospitals is an intensive user of energy. Higher room temperatures and better air quality required to maintain the health and comfort of often vulnerable inhabitants leads to above average energy consumption.

There are some common factors in regard to Nursing homes energy consumption, these are:

- Nursing homes operate 24/7 all year.
- In general 50% of energy costs can be attributed to the heating system.
- In general 25% of energy costs are attributed to lighting.

Highest consumption areas within a nursing home:

- Heating system
- Air conditioning
- Lighting
- Ventilation
- Kitchen
- In house laundry (if applicable)
- Lifts
- Pumps
- Pool (if applicable)

Energy Costs – Nursing Homes

Nursing home owners operating costs are increasing through increased energy costs. Nursing homes operate on a continuous basis. Many facilities tend to be older less efficient buildings. To heat these buildings, nursing homes rely for the most part on natural gas, which heats the majority of homes. To cool these buildings, they rely heavily on electricity.

Contrary to belief oil prices do not effect electricity prices in Ireland. Ireland's electricity comes from a variety of generation plants consisting of coal, oil, gas, peat and, in recent years, an increasing amount of renewable generation mostly in the form of wind power. Gas is the key fuel in Ireland's power generation, with in the region of 60% of our electricity currently generated from imported natural gas.

Gas prices fluctuate throughout the year. Like any commodity it goes up in price and it drops in price but one thing is certain – year on year the cost to business users increases.

Energy cost fluctuations play havoc on a nursing homes budget. Longer colder winters can be difficult enough to budget for but couple that with fluctuating prices and the challenge results in 'best guesstimates'. Energy costs directly effect profit margin and unless properly controlled will result in profit erosion.

How to make savings with Digren Energy

There are a number of ways to substantially reduce energy costs. These vary from no cost, to low cost to high capital expenditure projects. However, The best way to maximise savings is to implement an energy plan specific to your facility and budget. A significant barrier to using energy efficiently is lack of awareness.

At Digren Energy we encourage developing a plan that follows and includes the following steps to energy efficiency success:

1. Procurement

Obtaining and fixing the best pricing for your electricity and gas is a key factor. A fixed price contract removes the worry of fluctuating gas prices when preparing budgets. A key part of procurement is analysing all the costs of your bill over the past 12 months. Digren energy provide tariff and consumption analysis to provide the maximum savings. The unit rate cost alone is not enough as this is only one component of the bill. The actual unit price is derived from your total bill divided by your consumption – this figure is always considerably higher than the unit rate. We provide full detailed proposals outlining all costs.

2. Energy Audit

Digren Energy provide a sensible approach energy audit. We will request copies of your business's gas, electricity, water and heating oil to determine the energy usage patterns. We then carry out a full survey of the nursing home to identify energy use and wastage. The audit becomes the blue print for your energy plan.

3. Energy Awareness

Digren Energy are committed to helping you get a complete understanding of your energy requirements and to help you develop the tools to create awareness among your staff and the nursing home residents.

4. Energy Monitoring

We offer a number of monitoring products and services. These range from simple reconciliation and verification systems to hi-tech analytical diagnostic measuring and monitoring systems.

5. Energy Projects

Digren Energy can offer a full design and specification service for a wide range of energy projects. In regard to nursing homes these would generally be lighting projects, HVAC efficiency controls and advanced BMS.

6. Digren – Energy Bureau.

Digren Energy offers an Energy Bureau service. This allows our clients get impartial information and/or advice in regard to all aspects of energy management, energy efficient projects, bill reconciliation and energy training.

The best way to maximise savings is to implement an energy plan

