



Saving Energy at the Rink Helps Keep Ice Costs Down

The cost of operating an ice rink in Canada continues to escalate with utilities being the number one monthly expense. While at the same time user groups continue to seek affordable ice time and keep user fees as low as possible for their particular sport. Unfortunately this is where arena management is caught between the owners of the rink (in most cases tax payers) and the users of the facility when ice rates are set. Many users believe that keeping energy costs low is the buildings sole responsibility – this is not true. The users are a big part of the equation and can help take control of energy costs in their home rinks which in the end will help keep ice rates at a reasonable cost.

Here are some energy conserving items that can help us all win.

1. **Close the dasherboard doors.** The ice sheet is designed just like a refrigerator. Remember some one in your home always saying, “close the fridge door”. When your refrigerator door is open it is allowing heat to enter the box causing the refrigeration equipment to turn on to take that heat away. The same happens in the arena when the dasherboard doors are left open. Warm air enters onto the ice making the ice softer and causing the refrigeration equipment to kick on.
2. **Turn off the hot water in the shower when not being used.** Many times users go into the dressing room after play and immediately turn on the showers and let them run for extended periods while taking off their equipment. This hot water is expensive and a complete waste of energy.
3. **Stop dumping the water bottles on the ice.** Often players dump the leftover water bottles down the boards at the player’s benches at the end of the game. This water is a prime contributor to ice build-up along the boards. The ice resurfacers because of its design cannot cut tight to the boards. If left unattended it starts to thicken away from the boards causing the refrigeration plant to work harder. It also will need significant more maintenance using a specially designed tool to cut the ice away. These tools are most often fossil fuelled powered – more needless energy consumption.
4. **Tell your fans to wear a sweater.** Many patrons who attend an ice rink come poorly dressed for the environment. When the heaters get turned on the owner is paying for two energy sources – the heat in the stands and the refrigeration system because the heat that is being generated warms the ice causing the refrigeration plant to turn on.
5. **Car pool.** Many vehicles that arrive at the rink only have one user in them. Think about how many cars come and go at a typical ice arena on any given day. These vehicles use a lot of fossil fuel each year. Consider making car pool option a part of your team’s travel strategies.
6. **No Idling.** Many facilities are introducing no idling zones immediately outside entrances to the building. Please consider air quality for those that enter and exit our buildings, not to mention that many of these areas are also no parking areas for emergency equipment.
7. Many arenas have introduced **waste management systems** to ensure materials that can be recycled are recycled. Pick the right bin when using these containers so these efforts are not lost.

As users of the arena you can often spot energy waste. Please feel free to share your suggestions on how energy efficiencies might be introduced with your arena manager – collectively we will all benefit from being energy conscious.