



Earth Hour FAQs

MARCH 26, 8:30 PM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is Earth Hour?

Earth Hour is an annual international lights out event happening on Saturday, March 26 at 8:30 p.m. The goal is to get as many individuals and businesses as possible to turn off their lights for one hour to raise awareness about the solutions to climate change and demonstrate that people are ready to take personal action and that in turn, people expect more engagement on behalf of the government.

2. How will Earth Hour help?

Earth Hour shows that, together, our small actions can make a big difference to help fight climate change. Last year, over 10 million Canadians turned off their lights for Earth Hour in a show of concern to the government. This demonstrates that people are taking personal action to reduce their footprint and that they expect the same level of commitment from government.

WWF-Canada has also launched a new online campaign called the [Living Planet Community](#) which allows people to commit to personal actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and track subsequent reductions attained through these practices. Members of the *Living Planet Community* will also be able to see the total CO₂ reductions across Canada and by province, to see their part in this bigger commitment to making change.

3. Why should I participate?

Climate change is the biggest environmental threat to our planet and the number one concern for Canadians. We are already seeing its impacts. Participating in Earth Hour is a simple way to show that you want to be a part of the solution and sends a powerful message to others that together we can make a difference.

Scientists are showing that climate change is happening even faster than we thought. These global negotiations represent one of the last opportunities for responsible governments to put the brakes on spiralling temperature increases and protect the Earth's weather systems, ecosystems, communities and our collective livelihood from irreversible harm.

Climate change is a global problem that requires global cooperation. Our nations' leaders must work together to achieve a fair, effective, science-based treaty. We must dramatically cut global greenhouse gas emissions by 25-40% by 2020 and by at least 80% by 2050 compared to 1990 levels. This is the 'hour of truth' for the planet. By participating in Earth Hour, you are demonstrating to the world's leaders that you want to see them take immediate action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

4. When and where did Earth Hour begin?

WWF-Australia started Earth Hour in 2007, when 2.2 million individuals and more than 2,000 businesses turned their lights off for one hour to take a stand against climate change. Only a year later and Earth Hour had become a global sustainability movement with more than 50 million people across 35 countries participating. Global landmarks such as the Sydney Harbour Bridge, CN Tower in Toronto, Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, and Rome's Colosseum, all stood in darkness, as symbols of hope for a cause that grows more urgent by the hour.

5. How will you measure success?

Success will be measured by participation and by the darkness during Earth Hour. To measure participation we will look at online sign-ups, as well as complete post-event polling.

6. Who can participate and how?

Everyone is encouraged to participate – individuals, businesses, schools, and organizations. All you have to do is:

- Turn off your lights for Earth Hour on Saturday March 26 from 8:30 – 9:30 pm
- Pledge your support online at www.EarthHourCanada.org
- Help us make the event a success by telling your family, friends and local businesses
- Download materials like posters, logos, screensavers, etc. on the Earth Hour website.

7. What does Earth Hour mean for our business?

Earth Hour is not about telling companies how to conduct business. Rather it is about individual action and an opportunity for businesses to help reduce energy usage within their communities. We are encouraging businesses to turn off their exterior lights, including signs, as well as internal lights (excluding lighting for safety), and to ask their employees and customers to participate.

8. What did Earth Hour 2010 accomplish?

In Canada, though there was no specific legislative agenda in mind with Earth Hour, the message was heard on Parliament Hill. Here are some of the environmental successes that has happened since Earth Hour:

- Over half the Canadian adult population (over 10 million people) switched off their lights in a show of support for action on climate change.
- This demonstration has become the largest environmental movement in history and put climate on the forefront for world leaders.

9. What's new for 2011?

Last year, millions showed their support for action on climate change and 2011 is expected to be even bigger! More people, more businesses, more cities, and more countries.

Scientists are showing that climate change is happening even faster than we thought. These global negotiations represent one of the last opportunities for responsible governments to put the brakes on spiraling temperature increases and protect the Earth's weather systems, ecosystems, communities and livelihood from irreversible harm.

As we get ready to mark Earth Hour, WWF-Canada is calling on Canadians to think about how we use and produce energy in this country. Currently, Canada is one of the top 10 nations contributing to global climate change and, while other countries are pioneering clean energy technologies and solutions, we are holding on to an old strategy focused on developing sources of fossil fuels, like offshore drilling in the Arctic and continuing to mine the oil sands. But another way is possible.

There is a solution to climate change. We created this problem and we can solve it. Canada can be a world leader in clean energy. But the longer we wait, the more it will cost - both in dollars and environmental impact. To create the best possible future for Canadians, we must value carbon more, consume less, insulate better and make the switch to alternative fuels like wind and solar. This fundamental shift is necessary to protect our country, our economy and our planet for future generations.

10. How can schools participate?

Schools can register online and we encourage all schools to hold symbolic Earth Hour events in classrooms on Friday, March 25 – the day before Earth Hour. There are downloadable materials available online to help celebrate.

11. Who has committed to participating in Earth Hour?

Hundreds of businesses and thousands of people throughout the country have already registered their commitment at www.EarthHourCanada.org. These numbers grow every day. Registration is free and helps WWF better determine how many Canadians have committed to participating.

12. How many people took part in Earth Hour last year?

Over 10 million adult Canadians participated in 304 cities and municipalities across the country. Around the world, Earth Hour reached 1.3 billion people in 128 countries and 4,616 cities and towns.

13. Will this become an annual event?

Yes, but the cities participating may change. Solving the problem of climate change requires a long-term commitment. The plan is to make Earth Hour an annual event so we can engage more and more people around the world in the process of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

14. How does turning off the lights for one hour help the planet?

Turning off the lights for Earth Hour, along with millions of other people and businesses around the world, sends a signal of concern about the state of the planet and your commitment to take action to fight climate change.

15. What can I do to celebrate?

Check out these ideas on how to spend your Earth Hour:

- Host a party. Earth Hour is a great chance to spend time with your family, friends and neighbours. You can host a gathering in the dark. Encourage guests to bring “non-cook” foods and eat dinner by candlelight. Pull out your favourite board games or have a poker tournament. Kids will love a chance to play with glow sticks or glow-in-the-dark stickers.
- Play hockey. Encourage your local community centre to hold a dimly-lit hockey game during Earth Hour. Hot chocolate in reusable mugs will keep players and their cheering sections warm.
- Plan a community event. Whether it’s a “ghost” walk around a local historical centre, a block party featuring acoustic music or a guided star-gazing tour, show your creativity and bring your friends together to enjoy the night.
- Ask local businesses to join. Maybe your favourite restaurant could hold a candlelit dinner or your local yoga studio could host a yoga-in-the-dark event. Many businesses want to show their support for the Earth.

16. Will I be obligated to turn out my lights in this fashion every day?

Our goal is to have Earth Hour be your platform for future behavior change. Turning off your lights is one example of how taking simple steps in your lifestyle can make a big impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions – the biggest contributor to climate change. Our hope is that Earth Hour will inspire people to keep taking this type of action every day. For example, recycling, composting, using compact fluorescent light bulbs, etc.

To help support your continued efforts, WWF-Canada has created the [Living Planet Community](#) – a fun and interactive online community for concerned Canadians who want to stop just talking about climate change and start taking action. Registrants on the site can access tips, information, and even track their personal reduction in CO₂ over the long term. For more information on what you can do after Earth Hour, visit [wwf.ca](#).

17. Is switching off the lights dangerous?

No. It is no different than switching off your lights each night and then switching them back each day. Hydro companies are also prepared for the drop in energy use.

18. Are there public safety concerns with Earth Hour?

We are only asking people to turn off non-essential lights for Earth Hour – no lights that affect public safety will or should be turned off. All emergency services are also aware that Earth Hour is happening.

19. Will street lights remain on?

Yes. Earth Hour is to be celebrated in a safe and secure environment. Streetlights or lights in public spaces, hospitals and emergency services will remain on. Traffic conditions will remain unchanged as well. Only non-essential lighting will be switched off during Earth Hour.

20. Are a lot of resources being used to promote this event?

Earth Hour is a carbon neutral event. We are taking all the appropriate steps to ensure we leave as little impact as possible. Our goal is to turn out as many non-essential lights as possible and use only sustainable power where possible.

21. How can I support clean energy?

Not only is Earth Hour your chance to be part of a global phenomenon, it's a great opportunity to look at what you can do reduce your carbon emissions. For example, you can:

- Use less energy every day by turning off your computer monitor when you leave your desk and unplugging the chargers for your cell phones and other devices when you're not using them
- Use energy more efficiently in your home by washing your clothes in cold water and replace your fridge with an Energy Star model when it's time for a new one
- Use renewable energy to meet your household needs, like installing a solar water heating system or switching to a green power supplier

22. How can I find out more?

Visit www.EarthHourCanada.org