



Frequently Asked Questions

MARCH 31 2012, 8:30 PM

1. What is Earth Hour?

Earth Hour is a global grass-roots movement encouraging individuals, businesses and governments around the world to take positive actions for the environment, and celebrating their commitment to the planet by switching off their lights for one designated hour.

Earth Hour aims to show the actions that people, businesses and governments world-wide are taking to reduce their environmental impact. Thereby establishing and encouraging others to join an interconnected global community engaged in dialogue and resource sharing that generates real solutions to environmental challenges.

At Earth Hour 2011, we will see the world's most iconic landmarks go dark for one designated hour, as hundreds of millions of people transcend race, religion, culture, society, generation and geography, switching off their lights in a global celebration of their commitment to protect the one thing that unites us all – the planet.

2. When does Earth Hour take place?

Earth Hour 2012 will be held on Saturday March 31 between 8.30PM and 9.30PM in your local time zone.

3. What does Earth Hour ask people to do?

Earth Hour encourages individuals, businesses and governments to show leadership on environmental solutions through their actions, to use Earth Hour as a platform to showcase to the world what measures they are taking to reduce their environmental impact.

Earth Hour asks everyone to take personal accountability for their impact on the planet and make behavioural changes to facilitate a sustainable lifestyle.

Taking the first step is as easy as turning off your lights. By switching off your lights for Earth Hour you are acknowledging and celebrating your commitment to do something more for the planet that goes beyond the hour.

4. Does this mean during Earth Hour I have to turn off everything in my home and use absolutely no electricity?

No. The main point of Earth Hour is to show the world that a solution to the world's environmental challenges is possible if we work on them together – together our actions add up!

Earth Hour only asks that you turn off non-essential lighting. This does not mean you have to turn off your refrigerator, but we do encourage you to be part of this global action by switching off your lights, as well as making a commitment to go beyond the hour with a long-term behavioural change.

Safety and security lighting should remain on.

5. How long has Earth Hour been going for?

Earth Hour began in one city in 2007 when more than two million individuals and two thousand businesses in Sydney, Australia turned off their lights for one hour on Saturday 31 March 2007 to take a stand on climate change.

In the space of four short years Earth Hour grew to become the greatest environmental action in history with individuals, businesses and governments across 135 countries coming together for Earth Hour 2011 to show the path to a sustainable future is a collective journey.

More than 1000 of the world's man-made marvels and natural wonders, including the Pyramids in Egypt, Eiffel Tower, Empire State Building, Niagara Falls, Beijing's Forbidden City, Cape Town's Table Mountain, Sydney Opera House, Buckingham Palace and Christ the Redeemer statue in Brazil, stood in darkness symbolising a landmark moment in the planet's environmental consciousness.

6. Isn't switching the lights off dangerous? What about public safety?

Earth Hour only asks people to turn off the non-essential lights for one hour - not lights that affect public safety. Earth Hour is also a celebration of the planet so it's important to enjoy the moment in a safe environment.

7. What lights can be safely switched off?

That is a decision that has to be made individually but usually the overhead lights in rooms (whether it is your house or a business), outdoor lighting that does not impact safety, computers, decorative lights, neon signs for advertising, televisions, desk lamps, the list goes on and on..

There are a few lights we can say with certainty that should NOT be turned off, including safety lights in public spaces, lights for aviation guidance, traffic lights, security lights, just to name a few. We ask people to use common sense.

Before you turn off any lights for public spaces Earth Hour recommends you check with local officials or community centres. In your own home, use common sense with respect to safety. Keep small night lights on for basic safety especially in halls and on stairs. Make sure you have alternative light sources handy before Earth Hour starts, like torches or flashlights. That way if you need to see, you have a light source close at hand, and you can still respect the spirit of Earth Hour and keep yourself and your family safe.

8. What candles should I use for my Earth Hour event?

If you plan on burning candles during Earth Hour, make sure you use 100% beeswax candles or soy candles, which are gentler on our planet - smoke free, non-toxic and non-allergenic. They are also made of natural products, not petroleum-based materials, so they are effectively carbon neutral (the CO₂ they emit has already been taken from the atmosphere to produce the wax).

If you're using candles, though, make sure you take care. We suggest you carefully follow these tips:

- Candles should only be used under adult supervision
- Candles should never be left unattended
- Candles should be kept away from children and pets
- Extinguish candles before going to sleep
- Keep candles away from flammable liquids and gas-combustible materials
- Candles should be kept clear of any combustible materials such as paper, curtains and clothing
- Candles should not be placed in windows as they can be blown over. Blinds and curtains can also catch alight
- Candles should be placed on a stable, dry, heat-resistant surface away from drafts

9. What is Earth Hour's position on safety?

Earth Hour wants everyone to be absolutely safe and never to turn off any lights or power that would in any way compromise the safety of any individual in a private or public space. While Earth Hour is asking people to turn off lights for an hour the intention is never to make anyone or any place unsafe. So please put safety first when deciding what lights to turn off during your participation.

10. Will my city go completely black?

Earth Hour is not a black out. It is a voluntary action by its participants to show their commitment to an act of change that benefits the planet. For many businesses in city skyscrapers or for many government buildings, the lights are turned off at the end of the business day the Friday before Earth Hour. So Earth Hour is more of a fade-out in some ways than a black-out. There is usually no instant dramatic difference, but rather a gradual dimming of lights starting the day prior.

Many major icons and neon signs are switched off for the hour and they are extremely noticeable. You may be able to see dramatic changes in large business districts or at iconic landmarks and buildings around the world and in your city.

11. If everyone turns their lights back on at the same time will there be a power surge?

People celebrate Earth Hour in a variety of ways for different lengths of time, with many continuing to keep their lights off well beyond the designated hour. Therefore, it is highly improbable that everyone will switch their lights back on simultaneously.

However, we do work with energy companies and authorities around the world, who assure us that the unlikely scenario of all lights turning back on at the same time will not cause any issues. The load reduction should not be significant enough to disrupt supply post Earth Hour.

12. Is Earth Hour an annual event?

Though Earth Hour began as a public statement for action on climate change, it has come to symbolise a commitment to broader environmental solutions. Earth Hour's 'lights out' campaign will continue to evolve in accordance with the environmental concerns of a growing global community driven by the pursuit of a better, healthier world.

Earth Hour, is as much a celebration of the planet as it is a commitment to environmentally sustainable action, and is completely open source, i.e. it is by the people for the planet. So long as the global community wants to share a unified moment of celebration and contemplation of our planet, 8.30PM – 9.30PM on the last Saturday of March will always be Earth Hour.

13. Why is Earth Hour held on the last Saturday of March?

The last weekend of March is around the time of the Spring and Autumn equinoxes in the northern and southern hemispheres respectively, which allows for near coincidental sunset times in both hemispheres, thereby ensuring the greatest visual impact for a global 'lights out' event.

14. How many cities/countries/landmarks took part in Earth Hour 2011?

More than 5200 cities, towns and municipalities took part in Earth Hour 2011 across 135 countries including 89 national capitals and 9 of the world's 10 most populated cities.

They included:

- New York - Beijing - Los Angeles - Nairobi - Hong Kong - London - Moscow - Sydney - Rio de Janeiro - Toronto - Paris - Rome - Singapore - Mexico City - Dubai

And many many more of the world's biggest cities in a truly global action that took place in major metropolises on every continent.

More than 1700 landmarks also went dark for Earth Hour 2011, including some of the world's most iconic:

- Sphinx and Pyramids of Giza - Bird's Nest (Olympic Stadium) in Beijing - Eiffel Tower in Paris - The Las Vegas Strip - Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro - Buckingham Palace and Big Ben - The Acropolis in Athens - The Coliseum in Rome - Rio de Janeiro - Empire State Building - Table Mountain in Cape Town

16. What does a commitment to Earth Hour mean?

By registering to Earth Hour 2012, individuals, communities and businesses are making a commitment to turn their lights off for an hour at 8.30PM on Saturday 31 March in acknowledgement of an act they will undertake for the benefit of the planet.

Participation in Earth Hour is a sign of your commitment to show leadership amongst your friends, family, colleagues and competitors in finding solutions to our environmental challenges by adopting environmentally sustainable lifestyle habits and business practices on an ongoing basis.

17. Who can participate?

Anyone! Anyone who wants to unite with the global community in a worldwide celebration of the planet; anyone who believes a solution to our environmental challenges is possible through the aggregate of our actions.

18. What energy/carbon reductions have resulted from Earth Hour in previous years?

Earth Hour does not purport to be an energy/carbon reduction exercise, it is a symbolic action. Therefore, we do not engage in the measurement of energy/carbon reduction levels.

Earth Hour is an initiative to encourage individuals, businesses and governments around the world to take accountability for their ecological footprint and engage in dialogue and resource exchange that provides real solutions to our environmental challenges.

Participation in Earth Hour symbolises a commitment to change beyond the hour.

19. How can I help with Earth Hour in more ways than just turning out my lights?

For Earth Hour 2012 we are asking people, businesses and governments to go beyond the hour, to make a commitment to an act of ongoing change that benefits the planet. There are limitless things you can do on top of switching off your lights to take Earth Hour beyond the hour. Have a look at the 'How to...' guides [page](#) on this website for some ideas.

There are a host of materials on this website that will enable you to spread the Earth Hour message as far and wide as possible. Feel free to use these materials in any way you can to encourage people to switch off their lights for Earth Hour and take steps to reduce their ecological footprint on a continuing basis!

20. What does Earth Hour hope to achieve?

Earth Hour aims to unite communities around environmental issues by creating a forum where individuals can discuss ecological resolutions with like-minded people, by creating a channel through which businesses can exchange sustainable practices with their competitors, by building a platform that enables governments to showcase environmental leadership, and by ultimately establishing a global network of individuals, corporations and governments who are committed to the collective resolve of tackling the world's environmental challenges.

Earth Hour aims to showcase the possibilities of a united global effort by creating an inspiring visual display of the worldwide resolution to address global warming, to show what can be done through our combined efforts, to encourage leadership through behavioural change and to demonstrate the growing desire around the world to make those changes a reality.

21. How is Earth Hour 2012 different from 2011?

In 2011, we asked individual, communities, businesses and governments across the globe to go Beyond the Hour. While it is important to switch off, its just that – a first step. We need to give more of ourselves. To learn more and do more

The question is how? After all, we only do more if we feel like we're getting something in return.

That's where 2012's theme comes in. "I Will If You Will" is a challenge-based platform that encourages people to make a difference in the world by offering them something in return. It aims to inspire individuals, communities, businesses, celebrities and government agencies to create their own challenges to protect the planet. This will in turn result in a positive chain reaction, galvanizing more to take urgent action to protect the environment.

From something as personal as Dad preparing dinner for six months if Mum recycles for one year, to the Girl Scouts swapping 100,000 incandescent bulbs if the Boy Scouts raise \$50,000 for WWF's forest campaign, everyone can do their part because big or small, every action adds up.

22. Aren't you using a lot of electricity and resources to promote this event?

Earth Hour operations are run in a cost effective manner and apply donors' funds according to the highest standards of accountability and sustainability. We also consider and/or incorporate other climate or environmental issues as determined by the Earth Hour team and its partners.

23. Whose idea was Earth Hour?

Earth Hour came from a think tank initiated by Earth Hour Executive Director and Co-Founder, Andy Ridley, resulting in the formation of a partnership between WWF Australia, Leo Burnett and Fairfax Media to address the climate change issue.

In 2007, there was still a degree of scepticism and denial about the issue of climate change. Earth Hour came as the inspiration to rally people to the reality of climate change and start a dialogue about what we as individuals can do to help address the greatest problem facing our planet today. Leo Burnett partnered with WWF to promote the idea and help make the campaign a reality in Sydney, a campaign which has now gone beyond climate change to symbolise the growing global pursuit of a better, healthier world.

24. What is Earth Hour's relationship with WWF? Does WWF own Earth Hour?

WWF Australia co-founded Earth Hour in Sydney in 2007, facilitating Earth Hour's rapid worldwide growth through its connection to WWF's global network. With a presence in more than 70 countries, WWF continues to play a valuable partner role, ensuring a solid foundation and support network on which to deliver a truly global environmental message throughout the year.

25. Who are the Earth Hour partners?

Earth Hour began as a WWF-led initiative in Australia in 2007 in partnership with brand co-owners, Fairfax Media and Leo Burnett. All three partners decided from the beginning, however, that expanding Earth Hour's global reach would require working in partnership with any

organisation. Earth Hour's message has spanned the world with the help of many global partners.

26. Do you have requirements or regulations about who can or cannot partner with Earth Hour?

Any partner must uphold and support the aims and principles of Earth Hour. These include encouraging individual and community engagement on environmental issues. Encouraging conscious decisions to change the way we live in order to affect environmental reform, without the use of scare tactics or shaming. The specific decisions about whether or not to partner with a group or corporation are made at local level by Earth Hour country and city teams based on what suits their needs and community in achieving the goals of Earth Hour.

27. Does Earth Hour welcome the support of other NGOs (Non-Government Organisations) and NFP's (Not for Profits)?

Absolutely. In fact, the success of Earth Hour would not be possible without the support of other NGOs and NFPs. Global organisations such as the World Organisation of the Scout Movement and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts have been pivotal in spreading the Earth Hour message, while in some countries where there is no WWF presence, Earth Hour campaigns are orchestrated entirely by other NGOs and NFPs who share the same non-aggressive, guilt-free approach to addressing environmental issues taken by Earth Hour..

28. Are there any other social media outlets or forums for Earth Hour?

Yes, here is the most comprehensive list we have right now:

Current Earth Hour Global Social Media Profiles

- YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/earthhour>
- Facebook Group: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2235111402&ref=mf>
- Facebook Fans: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Earth-Hour/6867084435?ref=mf>
- MySpace: <http://www.myspace.com/earthhour>
- Flickr Photostream: http://www.flickr.com/photos/earthhour_global
- Twitter: <http://twitter.com/earthhour>

More global profiles on additional networks will be added soon.

29. What does the Earth Hour logo mean?

The standard Earth Hour '60' logo represents the 60 minutes of Earth Hour where we focus on the impact we are having on our planet and take positive action to address the environmental issues we face.

For Earth Hour 2011 we have introduced the '60+' logo representing a commitment to add to Earth Hour a positive act for the planet that goes beyond the hour.