

George Mason University
Center for Climate Change Communication

Americans' Actions to Conserve Energy, Reduce Waste, and Limit Global Warming January 2010

Interview dates: December 24, 2009 – January 3, 2010

Interviews: 1,001 Adults (18+)

Margin of error: +/- 3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

NOTE: All results show percentages among all respondents, unless otherwise labeled. Totals may occasionally sum to more than 100 percent due to rounding.

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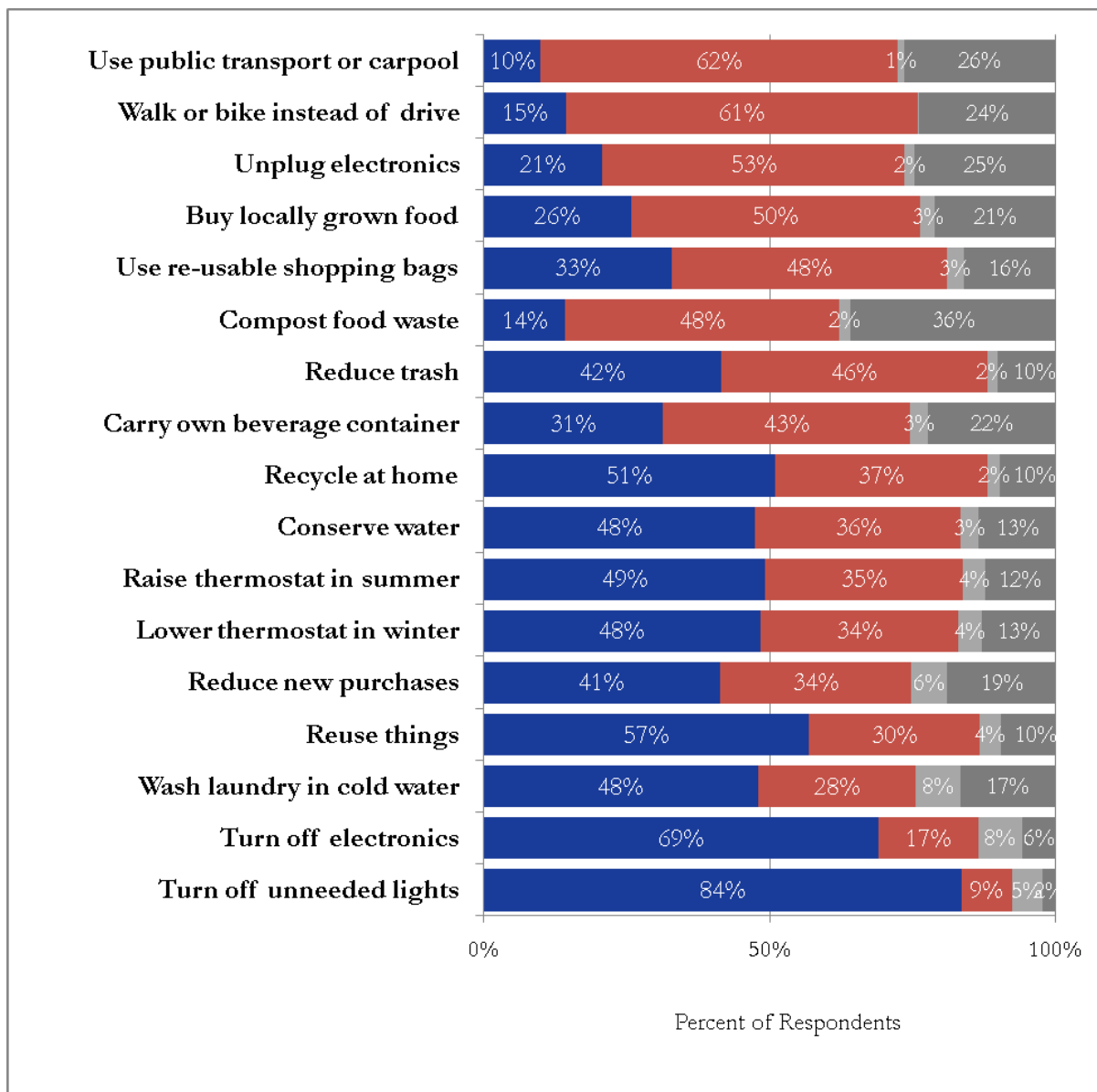
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<http://environment.yale.edu/uploads/BehaviorJan2010.pdf>

The Conservation Attitude – Behavior Gap

Behaviors ranked from the largest to smallest gap

For specific questions and responses, see the tables below this chart.

- Believe the action is important¹ & currently engage in it².
- Believe the action is important, but do not currently engage in it.
- Believe the action is unimportant, but currently engage in it.
- Believe the action is unimportant & do not currently engage in it.



¹ “somewhat” or “very important”

² “often” or “always”

Household Behaviors

Q1.³ To start, we'd like to ask you some questions about some things you may be doing. How often do you do this now?⁴

Turn off the lights when they are not needed.

	2010	2008 ⁵
Always	51	63
Often	38	31
Sometimes	8	4
Rarely	1	1
Never	2	1
Not Applicable	1	1

Turn off electronics, like TVs and computers, when they're not being used.

	2010	2008
Always	42	--
Often	34	--
Sometimes	17	--
Rarely	5	--
Never	2	--
Not Applicable	1	--

Unplug electronics or turn off their power strips and surge protectors when they're not being used.

	2010	2008
Always	12	--
Often	10	--
Sometimes	22	--
Rarely	28	--
Never	26	--
Not Applicable	1	--

In the winter, set the thermostat to 68 degrees or cooler.

	2010	2008
Always	33	38
Often	19	24
Sometimes	20	16
Rarely	10	8
Never	11	5
Not Applicable	8	9

³ Items are listed in the order they were asked despite occasional non-sequential item numbers. Items not shown in this report are being released separately.

⁴ 2008 wording: How often do you do the following things?

⁵ All 2008 data comes from a nationally representative survey of 2,189 American adults, aged 18 and older, fielded October 8 – 14, 2008. The sample was weighted to correspond with US Census Bureau parameters for the United States. The margin of sampling error was plus or minus 2 percent, with 95 percent confidence.

In the summer, set the thermostat to 76 degrees or warmer, or use less air conditioning.

	2010	2008
Always	31	35
Often	22	22
Sometimes	19	13
Rarely	9	8
Never	8	7
Not Applicable	11	16

Walk or bike, instead of driving.

	2010	2008
Always	5	8
Often	11	11
Sometimes	24	20
Rarely	25	20
Never	27	31
Not Applicable	9	9

Take public transportation or carpool.

	2010	2008
Always	4	9
Often	8	9
Sometimes	14	15
Rarely	18	19
Never	41	35
Not Applicable	16	13

Recycle everything possible at home.

	2010	2008
Always	29	--
Often	24	--
Sometimes	18	--
Rarely	14	--
Never	14	--
Not Applicable	2	--

Reduce the number of new things you buy.

	2010	2008
Always	14	--
Often	33	--
Sometimes	36	--
Rarely	12	--
Never	5	--
Not Applicable	1	--

Q1. How often do you do this now? (continued)

Reuse things you already have instead of buying new things.

	2010	2008
Always	20	--
Often	40	--
Sometimes	31	--
Rarely	5	--
Never	3	--
Not Applicable	1	--

Use re-usable shopping bags instead of paper or plastic bags.

	2010	2008
Always	14	--
Often	21	--
Sometimes	23	--
Rarely	19	--
Never	20	--
Not Applicable	3	--

. Compost food waste.

	2010	2008
Always	10	--
Often	6	--
Sometimes	11	--
Rarely	13	--
Never	54	--
Not Applicable	7	--

Carry your own re-usable beverage container.

	2010	2008
Always	13	--
Often	22	--
Sometimes	25	--
Rarely	13	--
Never	24	--
Not Applicable	5	--

Buy locally grown foods.

	2010	2008
Always	6	--
Often	22	--
Sometimes	43	--
Rarely	17	--
Never	9	--
Not Applicable	2	--

Q1. How often do you do this now? (continued)

Wash laundry in cold water.

	2010	2008
Always	29	--
Often	27	--
Sometimes	27	--
Rarely	11	--
Never	5	--
Not Applicable	3	--

Use as little water as possible, for example, when you shower, brush your teeth, and wash dishes.

	2010	2008
Always	18	--
Often	33	--
Sometimes	35	--
Rarely	11	--
Never	3	--
Not Applicable	1	--

Reduce the amount of trash and garbage you create.

	2010	2008
Always	13	--
Often	30	--
Sometimes	36	--
Rarely	15	--
Never	5	--
Not Applicable	1	--

Q1a. In the coming year do you intend to do this less often, the same, or more often?⁶

Turn off the lights when they are not needed.

	2010	2008
More often	42	38
The same	57	61
Less often	1	1

⁶ 2008 wording: For each of the actions below, over the next 12 months, would you like to do this more frequently than you are now, less frequently than you are now, or about the same as you are now?

Q1a. In the coming year do you intend to do this less often, the same, or more often?
(continued)

Turn off electronics, like TVs and computers, when they're not being used.

	2010	2008
More often	42	--
The same	57	--
Less often	1	--

Unplug electronics or turn off their power strips and surge protectors when they're not being used.

	2010	2008
More often	35	--
The same	62	--
Less often	3	--

In the winter, set the thermostat to 68 degrees or cooler.

	2010	2008
More often	20	26
The same	76	70
Less often	3	4

In the summer, set the thermostat to 76 degrees or warmer, or use less air conditioning.

	2010	2008
More often	24	23
The same	74	72
Less often	3	5

Walk or bike, instead of driving.

	2010	2008
More often	20	24
The same	73	63
Less often	7	13

. Take public transportation or carpool.

	2010	2008
More often	9	17
The same	81	68
Less often	11	15

Q1a. In the coming year do you intend to do this less often, the same, or more often?
(continued)

Recycle everything possible at home.

	2010	2008
More often	28	--
The same	69	--
Less often	4	--

Reduce the number of new things you buy.

	2010	2008
More often	30	--
The same	66	--
Less often	3	--

Reuse things you already have instead of buying new things.

	2010	2008
More often	30	--
The same	66	--
Less often	4	--

Use re-usable shopping bags instead of paper or plastic bags.

	2010	2008
More often	39	--
The same	57	--
Less often	4	--

Compost food waste.

	2010	2008
More often	15	--
The same	77	--
Less often	7	--

Carry your own re-usable beverage container.

	2010	2008
More often	26	--
The same	69	--
Less often	5	--

Buy locally grown foods.

	2010	2008
More often	27	--
The same	69	--
Less often	4	--

Q1a. In the coming year do you intend to do this less often, the same, or more often?
(continued)

Wash laundry in cold water.

	2010	2008
More often	23	--
The same	75	--
Less often	2	--

Use as little water as possible, for example, when you shower, brush your teeth, and wash dishes.

	2010	2008
More often	30	--
The same	68	--
Less often	3	--

Reduce the amount of trash and garbage you create.

	2010	2008
More often	32	--
The same	66	--
Less often	2	--

Q39. How many of the light bulbs in your home are energy-efficiency compact fluorescent lights (CFLs)?⁷

	2010	2008
All	14	12
Most	33	28
Some	19	22
A few	16	16
None	15	18
Don't know	4	5

People who said "some," "a few," or "none" on Q39 were asked the following question.

Q40. Over the next 12 months, how likely are you to change most of the light bulbs in your house to energy-efficiency compact fluorescent lights (CFLs)?⁸

	2010	2008
Yes, I'd like to and probably will	40	44
Yes, I'd like to but probably won't	26	26
No, I don't want to	22	17
I don't know	12	13
<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>527</i>	<i>1,190</i>

⁷ 2008 wording: How many of the light bulbs in your home are high energy-efficiency compact fluorescents (CFLs)?

⁸ 2008 wording: Which of the following best describes what you are likely to do over the next 12 months? Change most of the light bulbs in your home to high energy-efficiency compact fluorescents (CFLs)

Q41. On average, how many days per week do you personally eat beef?

Days	2010	2008
0	9	--
1	21	--
2	25	--
3	23	--
4	11	--
5	7	--
6	1	--
7	2	--

Q42. When you do eat beef, how much do you typically eat in a single day?

	2010	2008
I don't eat beef	7	--
One-eighth pound	13	--
One-quarter pound (the weight of a small hamburger patty)	51	--
One-half pound	21	--
Three-quarters pounds	3	--
One pound	3	--
More than one pound	2	--

Q43. Over the coming year do you intend to eat beef:

	2010	2008
More often	3	--
The same	84	--
Less often	13	--

Q137 – 153. How important do you feel it is to take the following actions?⁹

Turn off the lights when they are not needed.

	2010	2008
Very important	62	--
Somewhat important	30	--
Somewhat unimportant	5	--
Not at all important	3	--

Turn off electronics, like TVs and computers, when they're not being used.

	2010	2008
Very important	50	--
Somewhat important	37	--
Somewhat unimportant	10	--
Not at all important	4	--

Unplug electronics or turn off their power strips and surge protectors when they're not being used.

	2010	2008
Very important	31	--
Somewhat important	43	--
Somewhat unimportant	16	--
Not at all important	10	--

In the winter, set the thermostat to 68 degrees or cooler.

	2010	2008
Very important	40	--
Somewhat important	43	--
Somewhat unimportant	13	--
Not at all important	5	--

In the summer, set the thermostat to 76 degrees or warmer, or use less air conditioning.

	2010	2008
Very important	41	--
Somewhat important	43	--
Somewhat unimportant	11	--
Not at all important	5	--

⁹ The slight differences between data shown in these tables and in the figure on page 2 derive from missing data. Respondents who did not respond to both the behavior and importance questions were excluded from the figure.

Q137 – 153. How important do you feel it is to take the following actions?
(continued)

Walk or bike, instead of driving.

	2010	2008
Very important	26	--
Somewhat important	49	--
Somewhat unimportant	17	--
Not at all important	8	--

Take public transportation or carpool.

	2010	2008
Very important	26	--
Somewhat important	47	--
Somewhat unimportant	18	--
Not at all important	9	--

Recycle everything possible at home.

	2010	2008
Very important	44	--
Somewhat important	44	--
Somewhat unimportant	8	--
Not at all important	4	--

Reduce the number of new things you buy.

	2010	2008
Very important	30	--
Somewhat important	45	--
Somewhat unimportant	19	--
Not at all important	7	--

Reuse things you already have instead of buying new things.

	2010	2008
Very important	36	--
Somewhat important	50	--
Somewhat unimportant	8	--
Not at all important	5	--

Use re-usable shopping bags instead of paper or plastic bags.

	2010	2008
Very important	37	--
Somewhat important	44	--
Somewhat unimportant	12	--
Not at all important	7	--

Q137 – 153. How important do you feel it is to take the following actions?
(continued)

Compost food waste.

	2010	2008
Very important	21	--
Somewhat important	42	--
Somewhat unimportant	26	--
Not at all important	12	--

Carry your own re-usable beverage container.

	2010	2008
Very important	31	--
Somewhat important	44	--
Somewhat unimportant	16	--
Not at all important	9	--

Buy locally grown foods.

	2010	2008
Very important	30	--
Somewhat important	47	--
Somewhat unimportant	17	--
Not at all important	7	--

Wash laundry in cold water.

	2010	2008
Very important	30	--
Somewhat important	46	--
Somewhat unimportant	19	--
Not at all important	6	--

Use as little water as possible, for example, when you shower, brush your teeth, and wash dishes.

	2010	2008
Very important	42	--
Somewhat important	41	--
Somewhat unimportant	12	--
Not at all important	5	--

Reduce the amount of trash and garbage you create.

	2010	2008
Very important	43	--
Somewhat important	45	--
Somewhat unimportant	8	--
Not at all important	4	--

Consumer Behavior

Q201. Over the past 12 months, how many times have you rewarded companies that are taking steps to reduce global warming by buying their products?

	2010	2008
Many times (6+)	4	5
Several times (4-5)	7	11
A few times (2-3)	17	22
Once	5	4
Never	68	58

Q202. Over the past 12 months, how many times have you punished companies that are opposing steps to reduce global warming by NOT buying their products?

	2010	2008
Many times (6+)	5	7
Several times (4-5)	7	8
A few times (2-3)	13	14
Once	3	3
Never	72	69

Q203. Over the next 12 months, would you like to punish companies that are opposing steps to reduce global warming by NOT buying their products...

	2010	2008
More frequently than you are now?	32	40
About the same as you are now?	58	53
Less frequently than you are now?	10	7

Q204. Over the next 12 months do you intend to buy the products of companies that are taking steps to reduce global warming...

	2010	2008
More frequently than you are now?	34	40
About the same as you are now?	58	56
Less frequently than you are now?	8	4

Citizen Behavior

Q206. Over the past 12 months, how many times have you volunteered with or donated money to an organization working to reduce global warming?

	2010	2008
Many times (6+)	1	1
Several times (4-5)	1	1
A few times (2-3)	5	3
Once	7	4
Never	87	92

Q207. Over the past 12 months, how many times have you posted a comment online in response to a news stories or blog about global warming?

	2010	2008
Many times (6+)	1	--
Several times (4-5)	1	--
A few times (2-3)	4	--
Once	5	--
Never	89	--

Q208. Over the past 12 months, how many times have you written letters, emailed, or phoned government officials about global warming?¹⁰

	2010	2008
Many times (6+)	1	1
Several times (4-5)	1	1
A few times (2-3)	5	3
Once	4	4
Never	88	92

Respondents in 2010 who had contacted government officials were asked the following question.

Q209. When you contacted a government official did you...

	2010	2008
Urge them to take action to reduce global warming?	72	--
Urge them to not take action to reduce global warming?	22	--
Other	7	--
<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>104</i>	<i>--</i>

¹⁰ 2008 wording: Over the past 12 months, how many times have you written letters, emailed, or phoned government officials to urge them to take action to reduce global warming?

Q210. Over the next 12 months, would you like to volunteer with or donate money to an organization working to reduce global warming ...?

	2010	2008
More often	12	16
About the same	64	68
Less often	24	16

Q211. Over the next 12 months, would you like to post a comment online in response to a news stories or blog about global warming...?

	2010	2008
More often	10	--
About the same	67	--
Less often	24	--

Q212. Over the next 12 months, would you like to write letters, email, or phone government officials about global warming ...?¹¹

	2010	2008
More often	13	13
About the same	64	71
Less often	23	17

Respondents who said they would like to contact their government officials the same or more often were asked the following question.

If you were to contact government officials about global warming, would you:

	2010	2008
Urge them to take action to reduce global warming?	69	--
Urge them to not take action to reduce global warming?	19	--
Other	12	--
<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>711</i>	<i>--</i>

¹¹ 2008 wording: Over the next 12 months, would you like to write letters, email, or phone government officials to urge them to take action to reduce global warming...?