

Burning Fossil Fuels



Fossil fuels (coal, oil, and natural gas) are a non-renewable source of energy. Formed from plants and animals that lived up to 300 million years ago, fossil fuels are found in deposits beneath the earth. The fuels are burned to release the chemical energy that is stored within this resource.

Why do we burn fossil fuels?

Transportation

Fossil fuels are also overwhelmingly responsible for fueling our transportation system. Our country's entire transportation infrastructure of pipelines and gas stations is built around fossil fuels. You can drive across the country and find a gas station to fill up your car. That infrastructure is one of the hurdles preventing new fuel sources from competing with fossil fuels. It's extremely expensive to change a nationwide infrastructure, so to be competitive, new fuel sources must adapt to existing infrastructure.

- Increased fuel efficiency
- Hybrid
- Hydrogen
- Electric

Manufacturing

The manufacture of an average desktop computer and monitor uses more than 10 times its weight in fossil fuels.

Heat & Electricity

Coal power plants combust the coal in large furnaces creating tremendous amounts of heat. This heat is used to evaporate water in boilers so they convert to steam. The steam expands, causing pressure to increase in the boiler. A steam turbine is placed at the exit of the boiler where it converts energy from the moving steam into mechanical energy.

What are the impacts of burning fossil fuels?

Children born near factories which are sources of industrial pollution are more likely to die of leukemia and other childhood cancers before they reach adulthood.