

The Washington Post

Synchronize Your Watches

In its wisdom, Congress has determined that daylight saving time should start tomorrow—three weeks early—and end a week later this fall. So instead of the normal spring forward on the first Sunday in April, we will spring from standard time at 2 a.m. tomorrow and will stay there until the first Sunday in November.

The federal government believes the move will save 100,000 barrels of oil a day and, by pushing more human activity into daylight hours, reduce the use of light bulbs. Some experts believe that this abrupt switch may cause computer, security and technical chaos. We could save energy, avoid chaos and address this issue permanently **by adopting worldwide use of a single time**, with so-called Universal Time—formerly Greenwich (mean) time—being the obvious choice.

It would be confusing at first. For instance, tomorrow the sun in Washington would rise, not at 7:30 a.m. DST but at 11:30 a.m. And tonight, you'd watch the sun set not at 6:07 p.m. EST but at 11:07 p.m. (actually 23:07, because we'd be on 24-hour time).

And 53 minutes later, it would be March 11. Everywhere in the world. **No more international date line.** It would be odd at first, but people worldwide would quickly become accustomed to the local sunrise and sunset times.

The benefit would be that people working in airlines, commerce and a host of other functions would always know what time it is everywhere. Energy could be saved by adopting, in each locality, published "hours of work," which could switch by an hour in the spring and the fall, accomplishing exactly what daylight saving time does but without messing up our clocks and our computers.

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