

Green Office Checklist

This checklist is meant to lend guidance and share ideas on how to manage a more environmentally sound office and organization. Please give a copy to your office manager, and be sure to educate new staff to these office policies.

Responsible Paper Usage

- Purchase chlorine-free, high post consumer waste recycled paper.
www.environmentalchoice.com
- Keep mailing lists up-to-date and avoid duplicates.
- Eliminate use of fax cover sheets; write on the fax itself or attach a fax post-it.
- Edit documents on-screen as much as possible to avoid printing multiple drafts.
- Conserve paper by printing and copying double-sided. Buy machines that have this feature and ensure that instructions on using it are clear and clearly labeled.
- Use the reduction feature on a copier to fit more on a page.
- Print using lowest quality print setting when appropriate to conserve ink and cartridges.
- Save paper by design: use narrower margins and smaller fonts when acceptable.
- Use postcards for mailings when possible and use the smallest size envelope required.
- Save $\frac{1}{2}$ used sheets of office paper (sheets printed on only one side) to stock fax machines, use as scratch paper, and copy and print on when appropriate.
- Use reusable inter-office envelopes.
- Avoid using colored paper when possible.
- Cancel junk mail and mailings you receive two copies of.
<http://reducewaste.org/junkmailkit>
- Work with printers who use responsible inks and papers.
www.consolidatedprinting.net

In the Kitchen

- Keep washable plates, mugs, glasses, and silverware in the kitchen and avoid disposables.
- Purchase recycled and non-chlorine bleached paper towels and napkins.
- Hang hand-towels in the kitchen (and bathroom) and use cloth napkins in place of paper ones. Establish a system for washing cloth items.
- Purchase fair-trade, organic coffee.
www.newdream.org/consumer/marketplace.html
- Avoid individually packaged sugar and cream in the kitchen.
- Bring lunches in reusable rather than disposable containers.
- Provide a dish washing area to support staff efforts to use reusables.
- Eat out as opposed to carrying-out food, and don't accept Styrofoam containers.
- Bring your own bags when shopping.
- Limit or eliminate "fast food" chain restaurants from eating options.
- Compost food waste indoors, with worm composting or transport outside to a simple collection vessel.

Office Supplies, Products and Furniture

- Have a "used goods area" within the office and include binders, folders, padded envelopes, cardboard boxes, disks, etc. Use these before purchasing new supplies.
- Purchase and use products that are recycled and recyclable.
- Purchase unbleached or chlorine-free, high post consumer waste recycled paper products including binders, envelopes and even toilet paper.
- Consider products with minimum packaging; purchase in bulk.
- Use refillable pens and tape dispensers instead of disposable ones.

Office Supplies, Products and Furniture (continued)

- ___ Use non-toxic, biodegradable cleaning supplies.
www.newdream.org/consumer/marketplace.html
- ___ Fix or donate broken furniture rather than sending it to a land-fill.
- ___ If replacing your carpet, look for non-toxic recyclable carpeting.
www.epa.gov/oppt/epp/ppg
- ___ Purchase products from local suppliers (to avoid long-distance shipping and packaging) and from suppliers committed to environmental issues.
- ___ Purchase used items from thrift stores when possible.

Recycling and Proper Disposal

- ___ Set up a comprehensive office recycling program for paper, cardboard, glass, metals and plastic; and clearly label all recycling bins.
www.chicagorecycling.org
- ___ Recycle toner cartridges through manufacturers and/or local schools have collections which raise funds for school programs.
- ___ Dispose of hazardous materials properly. This includes cleaning products, fluorescent light bulbs, computers and electronics, paint, paint thinner, lawn chemicals, gasoline, motor oil, anti-freeze, and drain cleaners.
[www.ci.chi.il.us/Environment/under recycling](http://www.ci.chi.il.us/Environment/under%20recycling)
- ___ Collect and recycle batteries, especially rechargeable batteries. Free drop-off:
www.rbrc.org
- ___ Donate old cell phones for reuse. Drop-off and mailing information:
www.collectivegood.com
- ___ Compost food waste outdoors or indoors.
www.chicagorecycling.org
- ___ Recycle packing peanuts. (Call 1.800.828.2214 to find the nearest drop off location). Copy Shop takes packaging peanuts. Meyda Tiffany in Utica will take other Styrofoam materials as well as packaging peanuts.
- ___ Donate equipment and furniture to a resale store. Salvation Army offers free pick-up.
- ___ Educate your office about recycling and proper waste management.
- ___ Dispose of electronic waste with a recycling company. Edison Electronics is in Oneonta and collects on the first Saturday of every month at the MOSA/Otsego Southern Transfer Station.
- ___ Use printing companies that use responsible inks and recycled post-consumer papers.

Meetings and Events

- ___ Support environmentally responsible hotels and meeting spaces.
www.greenhotels.com
- ___ Ensure that meetings and trainings are held at locations served by public transportation. Include train or bus directions in the invite.
- ___ Buy locally-grown organic food, and support caterers who do, too.
www.localorganic.org
- ___ Label foods at events if they are local and organic.
- ___ In evaluations of meetings and events, ask how the event could be "greener" in the future.
- ___ Provide or encourage recycling and promotion of re-usable items at all events.

Transportation

- ___ Bike, walk, take public transportation or car-pool to work.
www.eRideShare.com
- ___ Tune-up vehicles on a regular basis and check air in tires monthly.
- ___ Purchase electric, hybrid or fuel-efficient vehicles when replacing vehicles. Use car-share programs when Feasible.
- ___ Use video-conferencing and conference calls instead of travel when possible.

Energy Efficiency

- ___ Turn on power-save modes on equipment and appliances.
- ___ Turn off equipment during nights and weekends. Attach TV's, radios, computers, copy machines, microwaves, telephones, etc. to power strips for ease in turning them off at the end of the day. (Even when not in use, appliances use electricity. According to Co-op America, turning computers and copiers off after work can cut energy usage by up to 75%.)
- ___ Install an automated thermostat (it's easy to do!) and/or set temperatures so that it will be comfortable during the day, and will use less energy during nights and weekends.
- ___ For windows that receive direct sunlight, close the blinds after work and on weekends to prevent excess heating in the summertime.
- ___ Use a ceiling fan or other fan in the summer time with or without air conditioning. Fans use 98% less energy than air conditioning and make you feel up to 6 degrees cooler.
- ___ Open the windows and turn off the air conditioning on nice days.
- ___ Ensure radiators and heaters are not blocked by furniture.
- ___ Add weather stripping to all doors and windows.
- ___ Use energy-efficient compact fluorescent bulbs.
www.newdream.org/consumer/marketplace.html
- ___ Use thin fluorescent tubes (T8) which use 49% less energy but have the same output as T12 tubes.
- ___ Replace flickering fluorescent lights promptly.
- ___ Turn off lights when exiting rooms.
- ___ Schedule an energy audit through your local power company.
- ___ If you have to use batteries, buy rechargeable batteries and a charger.
- ___ If purchasing new equipment or appliances, look for EPA ENERGY STAR-certified options.
- ___ Install motion sensors where appropriate. For example, in stairways where safety is an issue but where there isn't a lot of foot traffic.
- ___ Encourage employees to have a sweater or blanket for their lap, when they get cold.
- ___ Take the Cool Capital Challenge for your business or household at
www.coolcapital.org/institutions.

Water Efficiency

- ___ Attach low-flow aerators to sink faucets.
- ___ Fix leaky toilets and faucets promptly.
- ___ Check for water leaks at least twice a year.
- ___ Purchase water-efficient toilets and dishwashers.
- ___ Research what could be done with office gray water and put ideas into practice.

Improved Air Quality

- ___ Conduct an air quality check.
- ___ Add plants to offices and use natural fertilizers.
- ___ Change air filters regularly.
- ___ Use low VOC paints for walls.
- ___ Integrate indoor air quality concerns into your purchasing behaviors.
- ___ Turn off air conditioning and open the windows on nice days.
- ___ Establish an effective smoking policy to protect indoor air quality.
- ___ Notify your building manager immediately if you suspect indoor air quality problems.
- ___ Work with building management to ensure only necessary and appropriate pest control practices and non-chemical methods where possible.

Building Energy Audits

- ___ Check for insulation in each building. Should be at least 12 inches of fiberglass insulation or something comparable.
- Furnaces or heat source -
- ___ Check the efficiency of each heating unit, age, replacement schedule, and when replacement would pay for itself.
- ___ Install programmable thermostats and evaluate thermostat settings in winter - could they be turned down and could air conditioning be turned up in summer?
- ___ Install occupancy sensors on light switches in rooms where appropriate.

Vehicle Use

- ___ Idling vehicles, including diesel engines, is never necessary unless with a refrigerated unit. NY State has a maximum 5-minute idling rule.
- ___ Encourage use of bicycles whenever staff are traveling around town during weather-friendly months.
- ___ Conserve on vehicle trips, combine trips and plan ahead when using fuel-powered vehicles.

Green Office Links:

www.greenbiz.com
www.smartoffice.com/go.htm

Green Purchasing:

www.environmentalchoice.com
www.epa.gov/oppt/epp/ppg
www.newdream.org/consumer/marketplace.html

“Working Your Way to a Green Office” booklet:

www.atl.ec.gc.ca/udo/office/office.html

Original document compiled by Sundee Wislow, Midwest Field Coordinator for Heifer International and Chicago Recycling Coalition Board Member. sundee.wislow@heifer.org. Added to by Martha B. Clarvoe for Otsego County Conservation Association and Cooperstown Village Sustainability Committee, August, 2009.