



# Green Your Workday

Putting more on your plate at work may not sound like much fun, but have you ever thought that going green on the job might make your workday a little easier, and a lot healthier? It's true! From telecommuting to carpooling to recycling to energy efficiency, any job has the potential to become a little more earth friendly. And it's easy. Here are a few ideas you can work with.

**BEST PRACTICE AREA:  
ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED  
PURCHASING**

**BEST PRACTICE AREA:  
GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTIONS**

**BEST PRACTICE AREA:  
ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

**BEST PRACTICE AREA:  
WASTE REDUCTION**

## DID YOU KNOW?

The average American office worker uses 50 pieces of paper per work day and creates between 1.5 and 2 pounds of paper waste. On average, only 22% of paper used is recycled.

Even with recycling efforts, paper makes up over 25% of Minnesota's garbage.

## DON'T JUST THINK GREEN; WEAR IT:

Another change you can make personally is to purchase clothing with organic fibers such as cotton or wool. Avoid clothing made with a lot of polyester and that requires dry cleaning. Try using organic make-up, beauty and personal products for a different way to bring about your natural beauty.

Everyone should remember that little things add up a lot. When you are one person or a small operation, it is easy to think that what you do doesn't really matter. But when you multiply the things you do by thousands of other small operations, it's a big impact!

## GO GREEN AT WORK:

- ✓ **Green up your commute:** Since the workday begins when you arrive, start green with how you get there. Try carpooling, walking, biking or using public transportation. Keep track of how much money you're saving in fuel and parking costs to make you feel even better!
- ✓ **Go digital:** The greenest paper is no paper. One of the most effective ways to go green in the office is to eliminate paper. Back up data on external hard drives and use shared folders and e-mail to allow document sharing across employees.
- ✓ **Tone down the toner:** If printing documents is unavoidable, use the draft print mode setting on all internal documents. Use double-sided printing to minimize paper usage. Using a smaller font size and decreasing the margins will also help you to reduce paper usage.
- ✓ **Turn off the lights:** Turn off the lights when you leave your office or a conference or break room. Or install sensors that will automatically turn lights on or off based on detected movement. If you have a window, try working for the day without the lights on. You may be surprised what you can see. Also, turning off the lights will help keep your office cool during the summer.
- ✓ **Power down:** Turn off all printers, faxes and computers when leaving for the day. A common misconception is that it is more efficient, or safer for the device, to leave it on overnight. Not true! Also, if you cannot use your personal devices, cell phone, laptop, etc., at work, shut them off. You'll save battery life and energy needed for recharging them.
- ✓ **Let the sunshine in:** Daylight is the best natural resource. Arrange your office to best maximize the natural light. The heat will help warm the office in winter. If the window is adequate, try working for the day without the lights on. You may be surprised what you can see.
- ✓ **Get Real:** Plants. Real plants will add natural beauty to your office and also increase the quality of the air.
- ✓ **Break Time:** Bring your lunch in a reusable lunch box and put food items in reusable containers. If you go out, choose establishments within walking distance or offer to pick up food orders for the entire office to reduce excess driving. Bring your own reusable cups and mugs for water and coffee.
- ✓ **Green coffee:** Use reusable coffee filters. Purchase items in bulk and eliminate the individual packets of sugar and creamer. Skip the to-go coffee purchases and bring your own coffee from home or use the office supply.
- ✓ **Market Green:** Let your customers, suppliers and employees know about your company's initiatives to go green.
- ✓ **Recycle:** Place plastic and aluminum recycling containers in the break room and around the office. Make sure each employee has a paper recycling container at their desk and scatter additional containers around the office.
- ✓ **Tap the tap:** Sign up for bottled water service at your office and skip the individual bottles. Try attaching a water filter to the tap and encourage employee to bring their own reusable glasses or bottles.

