

Checklist for Greening Your Business



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency



Use this checklist to identify which practices are best for your business, and strive for as many as possible. You will conserve water and energy, and reduce your waste streams and carbon emissions. The result can be substantial cost savings, and your customers will be happy to hear of your environmental commitments.

Before you begin, commit to these two points:

- ☐ Involve your employees in the development and implementation of these environmentally responsible business practices.
- ☐ Gain management support to pursue these initiatives.

Water conservation and protection



- ☐ Post signs around your facility to encourage employees to use less water.
- ☐ Use sink motion sensors and waterless urinals.
- ☐ Use low-flow/dual-flush toilets, low-flow faucets and showerheads, and other water-conserving appliances and fixtures. Contact your local water utility for possible rebates.
- ☐ Sweep loading, unloading, and sidewalk areas regularly to prevent lawn clippings, leaves, sediment, and other materials from being washed into surface waters or storm drains.
- ☐ Ensure that materials stored outdoors do not pollute stormwater runoff or snowmelt.
- ☐ Manage stormwater on site by using a rain barrel, or direct downspouts into a vegetated area.
- ☐ Manage stormwater on site using a green roof, rain garden, or native gardens. Contact your local water utility for possible rebates.
- ☐ Manage stormwater on site using pervious pavements or pavers. Contact your local utility for possible rebates.
- ☐ Conduct regular inspection and maintenance of all water systems to ensure leaks are prevented or fixed immediately.

For links to more info about the suggestions in this checklist:
www.pca.state.mn.us/sbeap then click on Pollution Prevention (P2), then Green Checklist.

Indoor Air Quality

- ☐ Replace toxic permanent ink markers and pens with a water-based variety.
- ☐ Use non-toxic cleaning products and least-toxic disinfecting products such as oxygen-based instead of chlorine-based bleach, unless otherwise required by law.
- ☐ Do not use aerosol sprays of any kind; replace with pump dispensers and refill with bulk multipurpose cleaning products.
- ☐ Use low- or no-VOC paint products and adhesives.
- ☐ Use non-toxic techniques both inside and outside the facility to prevent and control insects and weeds.



Office Purchasing

- ☐ Purchase copy paper, letterhead, envelopes, business cards, marketing materials, and all other office paper products with the highest post-consumer recycled content available.
- ☐ Purchase the more cost-effective remanufactured toner cartridges.
- ☐ Specify the use of PIM Great Printer or Sustainable Guidelines for Printers (SGP) certified printers when utilizing external printing services.
- ☐ Purchase janitorial paper (toilet paper, tissues, and paper towels) with the highest post-consumer recycled content available.
- ☐ Purchase office furniture and equipment that is either refurbished or made of recycled materials, and which can be recycled.
- ☐ Lease rather than purchase computers and printers, or upgrade desktop computers instead of purchasing new ones.
- ☐ Ask your supply chain for green products, and/or become a green supplier.



Waste Reduction and Recycling

- ☐ Inform employees about recycling, composting, waste reduction, and other environmental topics, and get them involved.
- ☐ Reduce printing margins to 1 inch or less on all documents to save paper when printing.
- ☐ Reduce paper waste by using multifunctional printers, using email or other electronic means as appropriate, and printing on both sides of the paper.
- ☐ Reuse or recycle paper including cardboard (corrugated cardboard boxes), mixed paper (junk mail, scrap, and colored paper), newspaper, office paper (white ledger, computer, large format, and copier paper).
- ☐ Use centralized waste containers instead of waste containers at each desk to increase staff awareness of personal waste produced.
- ☐ Recycle fluorescent light bulbs (including compact fluorescent).
- ☐ Purchase products that can be reused and are recyclable, and reuse items that can't be recycled (ex: manila envelopes, crates, pallets, plastics that are not #1 or #2).
- ☐ Use reusable dinnerware in the lunchroom and meeting spaces, and use refillable containers for condiments.
- ☐ Reduce or eliminate the purchase of bottled water.
- ☐ Recycle all glass, aluminum, plastic bottles, pallets, and e-waste. Provide recycling containers in public areas.
- ☐ Compost all organics including food and yard discards, soiled paper products, and compostable food containers.
- ☐ Cut shipping, packaging, and transportation wastes and associated costs by buying supplies from local vendors.
- ☐ Purchase bulk-packaged supplies (ex: cleaning supplies), and buy products with the least amount of packaging or reusable packaging. Ask your vendor for more information about bulk purchasing.
- ☐ Work with suppliers to reduce and/or reuse plastic wrap and packaging.



Energy Efficiency

- ☐ Request an energy audit/assistance from your local utility to help ensure maximum energy efficiency in all areas.
- ☐ Use automatic lighting sensors in common areas, especially those that are intermittently used, like conference rooms and restrooms.
- ☐ Set programmable thermostat to 76° F for cooling, 68° F for heating; use timing devices to turn system down after hours.
- ☐ Use cold water for cleaning and laundering, unless hot water is necessary.
- ☐ Use power management software programs (purchased separately from computers) that save energy by automatically turning off idle monitors and printers, and use the standby mode on equipment (ex. energy saver buttons on copiers).
- ☐ Complete regularly scheduled maintenance on your HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) and refrigeration systems at least twice each year.
- ☐ Use weather stripping (weatherizing tape and caulking) to seal air gaps around doors and windows, and insulate all hot water pipes and cold suction lines.
- ☐ Purchase the most efficient light bulbs available for your light fixtures, moving away from any incandescent lighting. Replace T-12 fixtures with more efficient T-8's or T-5's, and in other fixtures and look for ENERGY STAR® certification and utility rebates. Be sure all fluorescent light bulbs are recycled properly.
- ☐ Replace incandescent lamps in exit signs with light-emitting diodes (LED's) or electrochemical cells (LEC's or LEEC's).
- ☐ Purchase ENERGY STAR® -certified equipment (including office products, refrigerators, dishwashers, etc) and ensure ENERGY STAR settings are enabled.
- ☐ Add power strips for each desk or computer where constantly "on" electronics are used.
- ☐ Consider purchasing computers and monitors that meet the more environmentally-stringent Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT®) certification
- ☐ Purchase fuel-efficient or alternative-fueled vehicles as older cars are replaced, and keep vehicles well-maintained to prevent leaks and minimize emissions; encourage employees to do the same.
- ☐ Use sensors (ex. Vending Miser) on vending machines to reduce energy use during periods of non-use (at night, after work, between visits). The average vending machine uses \$300 worth of electricity each year.
- ☐ Use Variable Air Volume (VAV) systems for central air conditioning and/or provide shade for HVAC condensers, especially roof-top units.
- ☐ Rearrange workspaces to take advantage of areas with natural light, design for increased natural lighting when remodeling, and reduce or unscrew lighting in fixtures directly adjacent to natural daylighting sources. Evaluate and take action in areas that may be "over-lit".
- ☐ Use or invest in renewable energy for the majority of your energy needs. Ask your local utility for more information.
- ☐ Buy renewable energy credits or green tags to offset the CO2 emissions from your office's use of electricity, natural gas, and transportation.
- ☐ Encourage alternative commuting options for your employees through incentives such as flexible schedules so workers can avoid heavy and long traffic commutes, carpool "boards", reduced rates for bus passes, and preferential parking for carpooling, and hybrid vehicles.



Thank you to the following for contributing: San Francisco Bay Area Green Business Initiative, Environmentally Responsible Travel Green checklist, UponGreen certification program

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Notes



**Minnesota Pollution
Control Agency**

Small Business Environmental Assistance Program
www.pca.state.mn.us/sbeap
651-296-6300 | Toll free 800-657-3864

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