



# Greening Your Company

*The following guidelines were compiled by the **Associated Builders and Contractors – Virginia Chapter Green Building Council** as a guideline to help you “green” your company by reducing waste, conserving resources, energy and water, and reducing your company’s carbon footprint. By making even the simplest changes to how your company does business, you can save money, time, and the planet’s precious resources.*

## Low Cost / Easy to Implement

### **Copying, Faxing and Printing**

- Purchase paper that is [chlorine-free](#) and has at least some recycled content.
- Eliminate use of fax cover sheets; write on the fax itself or attach a fax post-it.
- Set printer and copier defaults to print and copy double-sided.
- Set printers and fax machines to the lowest quality print setting – this conserves ink and cartridges.
- Edit documents on-screen as much as possible to avoid printing multiple drafts.
- Reduce document size when copying to fit more on each page.
- When creating documents, reduce margins and use smaller fonts to fit more on each page.
- Save used office paper (sheets printed on only one side) to stock fax machines, use as scratch paper, and copy and print on when appropriate.
- Reduce the use of colored paper when possible.

### **Office Supplies, Products and Furniture**

- Purchase recycled and bio-degradable office supplies.
- Use local office supply companies who obtain their materials from local sources.
- Reuse binders, folders, padded envelopes, cardboard boxes, disks, etc. 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.
- Consider products with minimum packaging; purchase in bulk.
- Use refillable pens and tape dispensers instead of disposable ones.
- Use green cleaning supplies.
- If replacing your carpet, look for non-toxic [recyclable carpeting](#).

### **Recycling and Proper Disposal**

- Establish a [recycling program](#) for paper, cardboard, glass, metals and plastic. Provide visible and clearly labeled recycle bins.
- Recycle toner cartridges. Many manufacturers have recycling programs.
- Dispose of [hazardous materials](#) properly.

- Collect and [recycle batteries](#), especially rechargeable batteries.
- Donate old [cell phones](#) for reuse.
- Recycle packing peanuts. (Call 1-800-828-2214 to find the nearest drop off location).
- Donate used equipment and furniture to a charity or resale store.

### **Document Routing and Storage**

- Review your incoming mail: cancel junk mail and unwanted subscriptions.
- Route documents and periodicals in-house rather than printing or purchasing multiple copies.
- Use reusable inter-office envelopes.
- Archive documents electronically in lieu of printing.

### **Marketing and Mailing**

- Consider electronic rather than printed mailings.
- Keep mailing lists up-to-date and avoid duplicates.
- Use postcards for mailings when possible and use the smallest size envelope required.
- Work with printers who use responsible inks and papers.

### **In the Kitchen**

- Purchase reusable plates, mugs, glasses and silverware in lieu of using disposable products.
- Provide an area for washing reusable items.
- Purchase recycled, bio-degradable and chlorine free kitchen supplies.
- Purchase recycled and non-chlorine bleached paper towels and napkins.
- Hang hand-towels in the kitchen (and bathroom). Establish a system for washing cloth items.
- Use large containers of sugar and creamer instead of individual packets.
- Encourage employees to bring lunches in reusable rather than disposable containers.

### **Education**

- Educate employees about recycling and proper waste management.
- Take an active role in USGBC and other green organizations.
- Encourage employees to become LEED APs.

### **Meetings and Events**

- Consider using environmentally responsible [hotels](#) and meeting spaces.
- Hold meetings and training at locations served by public transportation.
- Use videoconferencing, online meeting services, or conference calls in lieu of traveling to meetings.
- Encourage employees to carpool to off-site meetings and events.

### **Transportation**

- Encourage employees to bike, walk, take public transportation or car-pool to work.

### **At the Jobsite**

- Establish a recycling program for paper, cardboard, glass, metals and plastic.
- Recycle used building materials. Use existing reclamation programs (for example, for ceiling tile and carpet).
- Donate surplus building materials to a charity.

### **Water Conservation**

- Fix leaky toilets and faucets promptly.
- Check for water leaks at least twice a year.

### **Energy Conservation**

- Turn on power-save modes on equipment and appliances.
- Encourage employees to turn off lights when exiting rooms and at the end of the day.
- Encourage employees to turn off equipment when not in use. Provide plug strips for computers, copy machines, microwaves, telephones etc. 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%.)
- Close blinds on all windows that receive direct sunlight, after work and on weekends to prevent excess heating in the summertime.
- Open the windows and turn off the air conditioning on nice days.
- Ensure radiators and heaters are not blocked by furniture.
- Use energy-efficient and long-life fluorescent light bulbs.
- Replace flickering fluorescent lights promptly.
- Use rechargeable batteries in lieu of disposable ones.

### **Improved Air Quality**

- Add plants to offices and use natural fertilizers.
- Change air filters regularly.
- 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.

## **Higher Cost / Requires Some Changes**

### **Home Office Location / Construction**

- Incorporate green building strategies when building or renovating home offices.
- Locate home offices near public transportation.

### **Transportation**

- Provide discount passes for employees using public transportation.
- Offer incentives for employees to purchase low emissions vehicles.
- Develop a telecommuting policy to reduce home office commute impact.

- Purchase hybrid or fuel-efficient fleet vehicles.
- Purchase carbon offset points for company-owned vehicles.

### **Energy Conservation**

- Install an automated thermostat and/or set limits to use less energy during off hours.
- Use a ceiling fan or other fan in the summer time with or without air conditioning. Fans use 98% less energy than A.C. and make you feel up to 6 degrees cooler.
- Add weather stripping to all doors and windows.
- Schedule an energy audit through your local power company.
- Look for EPA Energy Star certified options when purchasing new equipment or appliances.

### **Water Conservation**

- Attach low-flow aerators to sink faucets.
- Purchase water efficient toilets and dishwashers.
- Insulate hot and cold water pipes.
- Research what could be done with office gray water and put ideas into practice.

### **Improved Air Quality**

- Conduct an air quality check.
- Establish an effective smoking policy to protect indoor air quality.

## **Additional Resources**

### **Green Office Links**

- [Green Business Network](#)
- [Sustainable Development International](#)
- ["Working Your Way to a Green Office"](#)

### **Green Purchasing**

- [EcoLogo Certified Green Products](#)
- [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Environmentally Preferable Purchasing](#)
- [New American Dream](#)
- [Earth 911](#)
- [United States Green Building Council](#)

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