

## **Sustainable Practices for your Business or Workplace**

Use this checklist to rate your own practices and to spark ideas on how you can save money in the long run, and make your company a place where everyone can be proud to work!

### Reduce Energy Use

- Change incandescent and CFL light bulbs to LED. Always recycle CFL bulbs properly. Ask your bulb supplier how to do so.
- Change out light fixtures to more energy-efficient version – technology is constantly improving.
- Adopt a “lights out” policy for all rooms when not in use. Better yet, installed motion sensors in offices, storage rooms and conference rooms.
- Use natural light and task lighting when possible. Limit the use of overhead lighting.
- Turn off printers, computers, copiers, and other equipment when not in use, especially overnight. Plug these units into power strips that can be turned off with one switch.
- Review operating hours for lighting, heating, and cooling to minimize energy use.
- Tune up your HVAC system, or ask your building owner/manager to do so. In larger buildings, have the system inspected, updated and/or replaced.
- Use using solar energy to heat water or to generate electricity.

### Reduce the Use of Plastic

- Use alternatives for shopping bags and plastic wrap.
- Offer straws only upon request. (See Shedd Aquarium’s campaign: <https://www.sheddaquarium.org/sheddthestrav>)
- Avoid all use of Styrofoam.
- Do not offer single-use plastic beverage bottles.

### Recycle

- Increase recycling in all areas of your business. Provide details below.
- Participate in Wilmette’s Commercial Waste Franchise and recycling program.
- Provide recycling bins in office areas, break rooms and work areas for your employees.
- Provide a water cooler with glasses if you have a dishwasher or biodegradable cups. Encourage use of reusable cups. Do not provide water in plastic bottles.
- Collect all printer and copier cartridges for recycling. Encourage employees to bring their old cartridges from home.

## Examine Your Packaging

- Reduce the amount of packaging you use.
- Use recycled and recyclable materials for packaging when possible. Avoid plastic.
- Train retail employees to always ask before automatically supplying a customer with a bag.
- Don't use plastic bags. Use paper bag made of recycled content or buy re-usable bags with your logo and provide them to your customers.

## Review Transportation Options

- Review your employees' transportation options. Encourage carpooling, public transportation, biking and walking to work.
- Review your company's transportation options – shipping, deliveries, company cars, etc. Buy fuel efficient vehicles for your fleet, adopt a no-idling policy, and plan routes for maximum (money-saving) efficiency.
- Reduce corporate travel, when possible, with video conferencing.
- Rent the most fuel-efficient cars possible.

## Review Sourcing Options

- Source goods from local and regional suppliers whenever possible - for example, paper products or building materials.
- Produce – Source seasonal produce locally.

## Reduce Paper Use

- Use paper with the highest post-consumer recycled content possible – try 100% or use at least 30%.
- Set up centralized files on your network to be shared.
- Communicate electronically whenever possible.
- Make 2-sided copies - make this your copier's default setting.
- Re-use the back side of all paper printed on just one side.
- Reduce the number of printed copies of memos and emails. Distribute agendas, memos, ads, etc. electronically.
- Proofread and use print preview functions before printing to avoid wasted paper.
- Buy paper towels and toilet paper made with recycled paper, preferably unbleached.

## Reduce Water Use

- Install water-efficient faucets, appliances, toilets and urinals.
- Install faucets (and soap dispensers) with sensors.
- Reduce landscape watering.

### Review Cleaning Processes and Products

- Use green products whenever possible.
- Review your cleaning processes to see how they can be made more efficient to save energy, water and cleaning products.

### Modify Landscaping Practices

- Reduce your use of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides, or use better, safer options.
- Instruct your landscape service to use cleaner equipment, such as electric leaf blowers.
- Use native plants that require less maintenance and water.
- Plant a green roof to save heating and cooling costs, reduce storm water run-off and reduce the heat island effect – the amount of heat your building gives off.

### Provide Employee Education and Development

- Provide environmental educational materials and programs for your employees.
- Challenge employees to propose energy saving ideas.
- Provide incentives to encourage employees to change their habits and choices. Pay for incentives from the savings you realize.

### Promote Your Efforts

- Let your customers, suppliers and subcontractors know about your sustainability efforts.
- Ask your suppliers and subcontractors to match your efforts.
- Provide leadership in your field or industry.