



Easy Steps to Greening Your Office

Tips from the Center for a New American Dream and its Responsible Purchasing Network




Reduce: Cut your waste and energy consumption

If You Already...	Easy Next Steps	Quick Facts	Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a common kitchen space and fridge for staff to bring lunches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start an office compost program • Purchase biodegradable trash bags so that waste is not trapped in plastic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food scraps make up ~7.4% of our waste in landfills • Landfills are packed so tightly that items which would normally decompose quickly, like food scraps, cannot decompose, or do so extremely slowly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can also chip in to get a worm composter for your office kitchen: www.coopamerica.org/pubs/realmoney/articles/worms.cfm  • For more information on landfills: http://environment.about.com/od/recycling/a/biodegradable.htm



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use CFLs  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have computers on power strips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put all electronics on a power strip and shut them down at night • Make shutting down the copier, printers, and other electronics a nightly routine • Take full advantage of natural light and unscrew several of the tube lights in your office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFLs use 1/3 of the energy of standard incandescent bulbs to provide the same amount of light and last up to 10 times longer • Over its lifetime, ENERGY STAR qualified equipment in a single home office (e.g., computer, monitor, printer, and fax) can save enough electricity to light an entire home for more than 4 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources on electricity consumption and vampire electricity: www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2002/09/020926065912.htm • Responsible Purchasing Network's guide to office electronics: www.responsiblepurchasing.org Select "Office Electronics" from drop down menu
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a programmable thermostat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program your thermostat to save energy while you're away or closed during off-peak hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmable thermostats do not contain mercury, and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions • Through proper use, a programmable thermostat can save you about \$150 every year in energy costs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More info on programmable thermostats: www.energystar.gov/ (click on "Appliances, Lighting..." on right side, then select thermostats from "Heating & Cooling")

Reuse: Avoid disposables

If You Already...	Easy Next Steps	Quick Facts	Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a paper recycling program in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Switch to 100% recycled & process chlorine-free office paper, toilet paper, and paper towels • Make 2-sided printing the default on all computers • Print 2 pages/sheet whenever possible • Collect one-sided paper to use for rough drafts of other projects or scrap paper • Invest in reusable towels and rags for the shared kitchen space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average US worker uses 12,000 sheets of paper per year • Paper accounts for roughly 40% of all municipal solid waste in the United States • One ton of recycled paper saves 17 trees, 7,000 gallons of water, and 380 gallons of oil – enough energy to heat the average home for 6 months. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New American Dream's page on paper: www.newdream.org/consumer/paper.php • Co-op America's Woodwise program: www.coopamerica.org/programs/woodwise/index.cfm



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have reusable cups and tableware 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in reusable plates • Use them. Set up a kitchen duty schedule for turning on the dishwasher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic tableware and Styrofoam is not recyclable in most places and will never biodegrade • #6 plastic used in foam plates, carry-out containers, opaque plastic cutlery, and other disposable food service items contain a chemical called styrene which can leach into food and beverages. According to the EPA, even short-term exposure above the maximum contaminant level can cause nervous-system effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concern with styrene used in production of plastic tableware and Styrofoam: www.coopamerica.org/tools/print.cfm?page=/pubs/realmoney/articles/plastics.cfm
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Recycle: Put an effective program in place

If You Already...	Easy Next Steps	Quick Facts	Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have bins set up for recycling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep one central trash can in each main room and remove individual trash cans from individual offices and cubicles • Clearly post what can and cannot be recycled by each bin • Use the DC Dept. of Public Works' guide to setting up an office protocol for recycling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial establishments in DC are required by law to recycle paper, aluminum, & glass. Plastic is strongly encouraged. • Recycling is a basic part of waste management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check with your local recycling or public works department 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are located near great E-recycling resources! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't throw away any outdated or broken-beyond-repair electronics! Contact an e-cycler or find a local computer donation program! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic circuit boards, batteries, and color cathode ray tubes (CRTs) can contain hazardous materials such as lead, mercury and hexavalent chromium. If improperly handled or disposed, these toxins can be released into the environment through landfill leachate or incinerator ash. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a fee, Staples will recycle: computers, monitors, laptops, printers, desktop copiers, fax machines and other peripherals. All other items are accepted free of charge. They also accept keyboards, mice, speakers and large peripherals. • Turtle Wings is a local, women-owned electronics recycling business. Check it out! www.turtlewings.com/

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In just one year, over 112 million pounds of valuable materials were recovered from disposed electronics for recycling and reuse. Materials includes steel, glass, plastic and precious metals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DC Dept. of Public Works organizes two annual events for free e-cycling collections. http://dpw.dc.gov/dpw/cwp/view,a,1200,q,575095.asp#05• More information at: www.earth911.org
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Buy Better: Shift to preferable alternatives

If You Already...	Easy Next Steps	Quick Facts	Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have communal beverages so you don't have to purchase from Starbucks every morning! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Switch to Fair Trade Certified, organic & shade-grown coffee and tea <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shade-grown coffee is better for the soil, and produces better tasting beans. • Organic coffee frees workers from the dangers of chemicals. • Fair-trade guarantees stable, fair prices, so that farmers avoid the fluctuating world-market prices. • The price paid to coffee bean farmers has fallen by more than 70% over the past five years. A decade ago, coffee-producing countries got about 1/3 of every dollar. Now, they see less than a dime. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check out New Dream resources on coffee and tea: www.newdream.org/consumer/buycoffee.php • Have an office screening of the film <i>Black Gold</i>: www.blackgoldmovie.com • Hold an office screening of <i>Buyer Be Fair: The Promise of Product Certification</i> www.buyerbefair.org <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have building-wide green cleaning products • Have control over soaps and cleaning products in the bathrooms and community kitchen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Switch to non-toxic, biodegradable, phosphate- & phosphate derivative-free dishwashing liquid • Switch to non-toxic, biodegradable, Paraben-free and, if possible, organic soaps for the kitchen and bathroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many cleaning and body care products are currently petroleum-based, contain unnecessary environmental toxins and chemicals associated with many human health issues, environmental problems and indoor air pollution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check out www.ResponsiblePurchasing.org • Environmental Working Group has tested hundreds of personal care products for toxicity: www.ewg.org
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Individual Steps

1. Have your office sign up for New American Dream's Turn the Tide and C3 campaigns and commit to taking as many of our nine steps as you can: www.turnthetide.org and <http://c3.newdream.org>.
2. Check out our Conscious Consumer Marketplace to find environmentally and socially preferable products, what to look for and why it's important: www.consciousconsumer.org
3. Get involved in our Local Buying Campaign—because “Local” is the new “Green”! Check out local guides at: www.newdream.org/buyingwisely
4. Bring a potted houseplant into the office to improve indoor air quality and improve the general office atmosphere.