

At Work

When a business goes green, it is more than just acting in a responsible manner toward the planet's future. Businesses can have a direct influence on how their customers behave, i.e. set an example for a local community. Not only that, but there are tangible financial benefits to going green. Here are a few things you can do, as a business, to reduce the carbon footprint:

- Consider scheduling an energy audit, to see how much of a carbon footprint your company is creating
- Try to moderate the temperature in the office by keeping the temperature a little higher during the summer/a little lower in the winter
- Do not run heaters/air conditioners while the building is empty of workers
- Placement of various pieces of equipment can also influence how much heating/air conditioning your building requires, e.g. placing hot equipment near an air conditioning vent will make your cooling system will force more energy consumption
- Check your building's insulation
- Carpooling or taking public transportation can cut back on your company's carbon footprint
- If practicable, employees should consider moving closer to the workplace to cut back on fuel consumption
- While walking or biking to work is something an individual employee can do, you can help by providing a bike rack, or perhaps, a shower to make a greener commute more convenient
- Allowing your employees to work from home will also cut down on energy consumption
- Trying to cut back on long-distance travel, given that aircraft produce the most greenhouse gases; video conferencing is both a less expensive and more green alternative
- If you do have to take long trips, try to combine them to reduce the amount of travel time
- Try to cut back on paper use by making presentations on laptops or on large screens
- Have your printers print on both sides of the paper
- Start a recycling box for scrap paper
- Try to use more environmentally friendly brands of paper and ink
- Install air dryers in restrooms, rather than using paper towels
- If you have a kitchen, use cloth rather than paper towels
- If possible, switch to green energy utility services
- When a device is off and not in use, consider unplugging it; even when not in operation, a cell phone charger, television or other appliance still draws energy
- Consider recycling old cell phones; there are a few companies that will purchase old cell phones
- A general recycling policy for other waste might not be a bad idea either
- Consider installing timers on certain devices to keep them powered off during the evening/on weekends
- Encourage your employees to turn their computers off and the like when they leave the workplace
- Have computers go into sleep mode after thirty minutes of inactivity
- On the same note, have monitors shut off after ten or so minutes of inactivity

- Replace your incandescent light bulbs with the more energy-efficient CFL ones or T8 or T5 fluorescent tubes instead of T12's
- Speaking of lights, after hours, turn off all lights in the office
- When ordering food, buy local
- Avoid buying bottled water and use a cooler instead
- On the subject of drinking fluids, use ceramic cups rather than paper or plastic ones
- Work with other companies to ensure that they are acting in an environmentally friendly manner; this includes querying your own supply chains
- Perhaps consider offering your most environmentally-conscious employees a small bonus