

Quick Wins for a More Environmentally Aware Office



There are a number of quick and easy steps you can take to reduce your environmental impact and save you money. Here are some to get you started.

Recycling/ Resource Use

- Provide glasses and mugs rather than disposable cups
- Limit use of disposable goods e.g. pens, in favour of reusable ones
- Make it easy for staff to recycle as much as possible; paper, card, glass, plastic, aluminium, CDs, batteries, old phones
- Take away individual waste bins from desks and replace with recycling bins
- Start composting food waste
- Lengthen the life of toner cartridges by adjusting printer settings in draft quality – and black and white
- Recycle used toner cartridges
- Recycle old computer equipment by giving it to local charities or community groups
- At Christmas, make a donation to charity rather than sending cards
- Use environmentally friendly cleaning products
- Give an active preference to products with minimal packaging and that are locally sourced
- Discourage excessive ordering of stationary by installing a central ordering system
- Use local suppliers/caterers where possible
- Maximise savings by putting up signage (printed on scrap paper) reminding staff to save energy and reduce waste
- Fix dripping taps

Paper Use

- Only print when necessary
- Save paper costs by buying 100% recycled paper and reusing discarded paper for notes – recycle all double-sided 'scrap' and use single sided to make notepads
- Default printers to print double-sided
- Print internal documents in size 11 font and reduce the borders to 1.5cm
- Inform staff whether agenda and minutes will or won't be available at meetings to avoid duplication of printing
- Send internal memos electronically
- Use 'track changes' to review documents rather than printing
- Cancel junk mail and unwanted publications
- Re-use bubble wrap, boxes and padded envelopes where possible
- Collect and re-use name badges after events and meetings where possible

Energy Use

- Minimise energy costs by ensuring that all equipment and lights are turned off (ie not left on standby) when not in use
- Install movement sensors to meeting rooms, encourage staff to switch off light switches by labelling light switches to indicate which area of the office they light – ask security to check all lights are switched off once the building is empty
- Encourage staff to switch off monitors when away from their desks for more than 5 – 10 minutes and to shut computers down when they leave the office. Turning off a single computer when not in use instead of on standby can save as much as £5 every year and turning one off that would have been on screen saver mode can save up to £45 a year
- Reduce energy bills by turning down the heating when it is not needed and always ensure that this is done before opening a window – check that heating is not timed to come on overnight or at weekends
- Turning the heating down by one degree saves 8% of the energy bill a year and the Environment Agency recommends 19 degrees Celsius is comfortable for most staff in the winter and 23 degrees Celsius in the summer
- If extra heating is needed, use oil-fuelled rather than electric fan heaters. They use 750w of energy as opposed to 3kw
- Ensure all light bulbs are energy efficient – LEDs are more efficient than halogen
- Ensure air conditioning vents or heating are not blocked by office furniture/boxes
- Switch your electricity supplier to a green tariff. Many suppliers will assist in monitoring energy use and promoting reduction

Transport use

- Save time, inconvenience and pollution by using conference calls rather than travelling to meetings where possible
- Provide interest-free season ticket loans
- Use cycle couriers where possible
- Use LPG and/or carbon neutral taxi companies and encourage use of public transport whenever possible by making this easier to book through a central system
- Encourage staff to cycle to work by installing secure bike racks, shower facilities and cycle mileage allowance
- Introduce travel policies that reward car sharing

