



Institutional Sustainability Audit

Paper

goal: Minimize use, encourage recycling and minimize disposal.

- Paper recycling containers at each desk
- Central receptacles at copiers and printers
- Regular practice of printing on both sides of paper
- Use recycled-content paper-towels and toilet paper
- Avoid printing documents when an electronic copy is sufficient

Energy

goal: Reduce energy consumption, procure from renewable sources, and undertake initiatives to reduce the harmful effects of energy production.

- Use of energy efficient appliances and equipment (copiers, lighting, dishwashers, etc.)
- Use timers for appliances and equipment
- Energy awareness program for educating staff
- Easy stair access, discouraging elevator use when appropriate
- Discourage staff working from working over-time (saves energy)
- Sensor activated escalators
- Purchase renewable energy
- Offer HVAC alternatives: open windows/doors for cross ventilation, blinds/curtains/awnings, turn-off appliances when not in use
- Use natural light as appropriate

Water

goal: Minimize water use and recycle and pre-treat before disposal where possible.

- Use of low-flow sinks and
- Use of dual flush toilets or other low-water models
- Water-wise landscaping and use of native species
- Use of non-phosphorous soaps
- Use of grey water (from sinks and rain) for landscape, toilets and other appropriate applications
- Hire plumbers that understand water conservation
- Water HVAC system operating at optimal temperature level (for dry climates)

Waste

goal: Focus on avoiding and minimizing waste; and reusing and recycling before final treatment and disposal.

- Recycling of cardboard, aluminum, glass, plastics, and beverage cartons
- Return toner cartridges to manufacturer
- Recycle/compost organic waste
- Donate or recycle office furniture, computers, computer disks, telephones and other items
- Offer reusable plates, utensils mugs and glasses in break rooms



Purchasing

goal: Environmentally, socially and economically sustainable purchase of goods and services.

- Lifecycle impact assessment for purchased goods
- Recycled content products receive preference to virgin material products
- Recycled content (80% or higher) in copy paper, letterhead and envelopes
- Support local suppliers
- Consider transportation costs from manufacture to destination when selecting suppliers
- Purchase in bulk to reduce packaging and delivery vehicle emissions
- Develop a list of preferred environmentally friendly products
- Regular maintenance and inspection of equipment to maximize life
- Use of environmentally friendly cleaning agents
- Low VOC carpeting, paints, etc.
- Rent equipment that is used infrequently

Travel

goal: Encourage utilization of alternative transportation and mitigate negative impacts of transportation use.

- Minimize car fleet while employing fuel-efficient or low-emission vehicles
- Encourage employees to use public transit/walking/cycling
- Offer telecommuting and the option of working at home where appropriate
- Support public transit pass programs
- Easy access to bus/train time-tables or other transit information
- Provision of facilities for bicyclists: racks, lock-up areas, showers and changing rooms
- Organize a carpool program
- Purchase CO2 emission offsets for air travel
- Use e-mail, telephone and video conferencing as alternatives to travel

Staff

goal: Increase staff understanding and awareness of environmental and social issues, and increase their ability to sustain productive effort.

- Promote environmental understanding via meetings, surveys, information postings
- Established method (message board, meetings, e-mail) for disseminating information on recycling
- Create a position for a Workplace Sustainability Coordinator to focus on the company's products, staff and community impact
- Flex-time and/or job-share are offered.
- Task sharing and diversification of duties.
- Common rooms and non-work space
- Wellness or stress reduction programs
- Ergonomic workspace (also plants and artwork)
- Teambuilding and social activities



Why Perform a Sustainability Audit?

Environmental Benefits

- Improved environmental performance and responsibility
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and global warming
- Improve air quality
- Reduce waste sent to landfill
- Reduce air and water pollution
- Reduce resource consumption

Social Benefits

- Improve employee health (physical and psychological)
- Improve personal responsibility and workplace health
- Expansion of sustainable practices to personal life
- Increase employee productivity and efficiency
- Improve indoor air quality

Economic Benefits

- Reduce water, energy, disposal and materials purchasing costs
- Possible grant funding for sustainability program
- Support local business through purchasing locally
- Support of sustainable businesses – renewable energy, organic agriculture, sustainable products
- Creation of sustainable research and new sustainable industries
- New employment opportunities

Economic Costs

- Higher prices for some sustainable products and services
- Cost of end-of-use facilities (disposal)
- Loss of non-sustainable industries/jobs

Upon conducting an audit – you know where you stand.

Now what?

1. Develop practical solutions to reduce waste output
2. Involve staff in the development and completion of initiatives
3. Develop mandatory eco-efficiency policies and procedures and implement them
4. Develop an awareness/education program for staff
5. Introduce reporting and targets for cleaner production and eco-efficiency actions
6. Continue and expand the program