



ENERGY FOCUS

Conserve Energy at Work Using These Tips

Not all of us are stuck in an office five days a week (or more) for work, but those of us who are can help save energy and conserve resources by making a few changes in our habits, persuading others to do the same, and lobbying for policy changes at the management level.

Change doesn't come easily, though, and energy-conscious worker bees should endeavor to avoid agitating the nest in their efforts to green their workplace. Tact, patience, and collaboration are far more likely to achieve lasting results than bullying, condescension, or guilt-laden tactics. Here's a list of straightforward suggestions for making your office more efficient:

Lighting

- Incandescent or halogen desk lamps are handy for lighting your personal work space, but are very inefficient. Consider replacing these lamps with compact florescent bulbs – the newer ones are warm in tone and don't buzz or flicker a bit. Plus, they use a quarter of the electricity.
- Turn off the lights around you when you're leaving for more than a minute or two and switch off lights in unoccupied rooms. Check to see if all the lights are off at the close of the business day.

Heating/Cooling

- In summer, open windows and use fans instead of power-hungry air conditioning. Use blinds to keep afternoon sun from heating up the room. If air conditioning is necessary, be sure windows and exterior doors are shut.
- In winter, dress warmly instead of asking that the heat be turned up. Dress in layers to allow you to adapt easily for comfort.
- Sit farther away from cold windows – you're less likely to feel cold this way. Draw the curtains and use the blinds at night to minimize heat loss. Make sure outside doors close completely and that windows are shut.

Office Equipment

- Use your computer's automated settings to turn off your monitor (screensavers do not save energy) and/or hard drives when not in use for more than a few minutes; or turn it off yourself. Stand-by modes consume considerable energy – this is true of all office equipment.
- Printers, fax machines, and copiers use less energy overall when energy-conserving or stand-by modes are engaged during the workday. Nevertheless, they'll conserve even more power if turned off completely at the end of the day.
- Print double-sided, or multiple pages on a single sheet of paper.
- Look for power-conserving features on all office equipment and endeavor to use them. An Energy Star label is a good clue that these features are available.
- Look for unused coffeemakers, hotplates, and other appliances that can be switched off. Leftover coffee need not be heated for hours.
- Equipment that is only very occasionally used should be unplugged altogether – items like DVD players and televisions. Look for chargers, AC adapters, and other plug-ins that are rarely used.
- Encourage your office to purchase "smart" energy strips, which automatically turn off items when not in use, helping to eliminate "phantom" electric loads.

Recycling

- If it can be recycled, do so. In the Fairbanks area, this can be a challenge, but is not impossible. The larger box stores often collect all kinds of recycling, which your office can store up until a car or truck load is ready. Or, call Interior Alaska Green Star for help (www.iagreenstar.org).
- When possible, use reusable products in place of disposable products (cups, plates, cutlery, etc.).
- If using non-reusable products – especially paper products – look for the highest post-consumer recycled content available.
- Don't print emails or correspondence unless you have to – electrons are inherently recyclable.

Energy Focus articles promote home awareness for the Cooperative Extension Service (CES) and the Cold Climate Housing Research Center (CCHRC). For questions or comments please contact CCHRC at (907) 457-3454

