

## Tips to help **Big Blue Go Green!**

Understanding how our daily choices can impact our environment is key to conserving and preserving our natural resources, and ensuring a healthy environment for present and future generations. By making a few small changes in our day-to-day activities the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service can do our part in caring for our Earth. We can make a difference!

Consider the tips below. Think about your daily routine. Which of these suggestions pertain to you and your office? Talk with your co-workers about what you can do together to help Big Blue Go Green!

### **At the office...**

- Take advantage of technology. Email documents and messages when possible. Post items, such as newsletters, upcoming events, and flyers on the Internet. Pay bills online if possible.
- If you do have to fax an item, use a small label as opposed to a full-page cover sheet.
- Think before you print.
- Use both sides of paper for printing, copying, and taking notes.
- Assign one printer tray in the office for reusing paper that has only been printed on one side. Use this printer tray to print draft documents and emails.
- Use smaller fonts, reduce page margins, and use single line spacing when possible to save paper.
- Update mailing lists to reduce returned mailings and unneeded printing.
- Eliminate newsletter, newspaper, and magazine subscriptions that are not read on a regular basis. Check to see if subscriptions that are read are available online.
- Purchase reusable office supplies, such as undated, erasable wall calendars, refillable pens, and dry erase boards. Reuse items such as file folders.
- Purchase materials, such as paper, folders, and envelopes, made from recycled content when possible.
- Create an office surplus area to store and exchange reusable items.
- Have leaky faucets, fixtures, and toilets repaired.
- When turning on the tap, use cold water whenever possible. Using hot water requires energy.

see blue. go green.

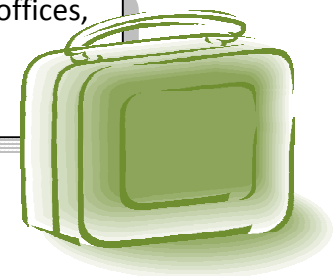


Disabilities accommodated with prior notification.

- Check the temperature of refrigerators and freezers to make sure temperatures are within the recommended ranges, and are not too cold.
- Program your computer to go into a “sleep-mode” after 30 minutes of inactivity. Many operating systems are already preset to do this.
- Replace regular light bulbs with ENERGY STAR qualified compact fluorescent light bulbs.
- Turn off lights, computers, printers, and other equipment when not in use.
- Use rechargeable batteries.
- Recycle printer and toner cartridges. Some clubs, schools, and organizations collect these items for fundraisers. If a fundraising program is not in place, consider starting one.
- Recycle items such as aluminum cans, plastic bottles, glass jars, newspaper, junk mail, and cardboard. Contact your County Solid Waste Coordinator for information on recycling programs in your community or visit [www.waste.ky.gov/recycling/](http://www.waste.ky.gov/recycling/).
- Place recycle bins strategically throughout the office in high traffic areas. Provide information on what can and cannot be recycled at each bin.
- Recycle electronic waste (e-scrap). Contact your County Solid Waste Coordinator regarding e-scrap recycling programs in your community or visit <http://www.waste.ky.gov/branches/rla/Electronics+Recycling.htm>. If your county does not offer an e-scrap recycling program, work with your County Solid Waste Coordinator to plan an e-scrap collection day.
- Repair equipment when possible instead of buying new.
- Weather-strip doors and windows to save energy.
- When purchasing new equipment, look for ENERGY STAR and WaterSense qualified products. Visit [www.energystar.gov/](http://www.energystar.gov/) and [www.epa.gov/watersense/](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/) for more information.
- If applicable, take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Need furniture? Restore what you already have or shop at second-hand stores.
- Use reusable cups, plates, and utensils.
- Eating out, especially fast food, can create a lot of waste due to packaging. Instead take your lunch. Once a week have a potluck meal with coworkers. If possible, use local produce and products.



Encourage waste-free lunches at programs throughout your county...offices, schools, daycares, club events...for resources and information visit [www.epa.gov/epawaste/education/lunch.htm](http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/education/lunch.htm).



- Use non-toxic, non-VOC (volatile organic compound), biodegradable, water-based, phosphate-, ammonia-, and chlorine-free cleaners. For information on green cleaning products and how to make your own visit [www.thegreenguide.com/home-garden/cleaning](http://www.thegreenguide.com/home-garden/cleaning).
- Use integrated pest management techniques to control insects and rodents.
- If applicable, purchase an ENERGY STAR qualified programmable thermostat to regulate your office building's temperature.
- Install motion-sensing light controls in restrooms, supply closets, and copier rooms.
- Reduce waste. Purchase items that use less packaging. Buy items that are used frequently in bulk, and look for items that are sold in reusable or recycled containers.
- Use reusable bags when shopping. Many stores offer discounts for bringing your own bag. According to Reuseablebags.com approximately 500 billion to 1 trillion plastic bags are used worldwide each year.
- Reuse items. Use travel mugs versus disposable coffee cups, repair broken items whenever possible, and donate materials no longer wanted to a local charity or church organization.
- If applicable, install a rain barrel to collect rainwater to use on indoor and outdoor plants and the lawn. Use the rain barrel as a demonstration for clientele.
- Compost using an indoor worm bin or outdoor pile/bin. Visit [www.ca.uky.edu/enri/compost.php](http://www.ca.uky.edu/enri/compost.php) for more information.
- Use shredded paper as packaging for shipping items or as bedding for your worm bin.
- Remove your office's address from direct/junk mailings (visit [www.dmachoice.org](http://www.dmachoice.org) for more information).
- If applicable, plant native species in lawn/garden areas. Reduce or eliminate the amount of chemical fertilizers needed by using compost. Water lawn/garden areas in early morning to reduce water loss from evaporation.
- Invest in doormats to help prevent particulate matter (tiny particles made up of dust, soil, and other materials that can cause indoor air pollution) from entering the office.
- List your office's efforts in going "green" for clientele to view. Provide information on how they can "go green" as well. Facts, information cards, and more are available to download and print off at [www.ca.uky.edu/gogreen](http://www.ca.uky.edu/gogreen).



*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." ~ Margaret Mead*

**During meetings, club events, field days, etc...**

- Take advantage of technology, such as email, podcasts, and video conferencing, when applicable. Email messages to participants. Post items, such as flyers, presentations, brochures, and fact sheets on the Internet. Have online registration. Use conference call technologies as opposed to traveling to meetings. If conference calls are not practical or not available, carpool with other attendees, or bike or walk if possible.
- Think local when preparing snacks or meals. Did you know that, on average, produce in the U.S. travels 1300-2000 miles from farm to table? By buying fruits, vegetables, meats, and other products from local producers you can support local agriculture and conserve resources, such as energy. For information on local Kentucky producers and products visit [www.kyagr.com/kyproud](http://www.kyagr.com/kyproud).
- Use reusable mugs, cups, plates, and utensils.
- If you are hosting an event, encourage participants to bring their own travel mugs or water bottles. Or offer travel mugs or water bottles as a give-a-way with your event's name and logo.
- If you are attending an event, bring your own travel mug or water bottle.
- Use your CES nametag as opposed to creating a new nametag. If you are hosting the event, use nametags in reusable holders. For youth events, create nametags using natural products such as cross sections of trees (tree cookies). Youth and adults love to keep the "tree cookie" nametags as keepsakes and they can be used again and again.
- Provide recycling containers for aluminum cans, paper, and plastic bottles. Contact your County Solid Waste Coordinator for information on recycling programs in your county or visit [www.waste.ky.gov/recycling/](http://www.waste.ky.gov/recycling/).
- For a "greener" cup of coffee consider purchasing fair-trade, shade grown, organic coffee. Invest in reusable coffee filters, and buy sugar, sweeteners, and creamers in bulk as opposed to single use packets.
- If you are hosting an event, explain to participants your efforts in making the meeting "green." Explain the choices you made and why. This provides an excellent educational opportunity.

**On the road...**

- Carpool, bike, or walk to work. Encourage others to do the same.
- Run multiple errands at once to save gas.
- If you plan to be parked for longer than 10 seconds, turn off your engine. Vehicle idling wastes gas and money, and causes increased air pollution.
- Forego eating out and pack a snack or meal. Fast food restaurant meals often come with a lot of packaging, and serving sizes can be large resulting in uneaten food. Packaging and uneaten food can result in a lot waste for the environment and your pocket book. BYOC—Bring Your Own Cup! Bring your own reusable travel mug or water bottle.