



Accounting for 47% of all carbon emissions in New York City, non-residential buildings possess a great potential to shrink our eco-footprints. Whether you're an office worker, small business owner, skilled tradesperson, or CEO, you can lower your impact and raise your company's bottom line. Steps you can take at the office to save energy, reduce waste and make a positive contribution toward a more sustainable NYC are below.

USE NATURAL LIGHT

While lighting accounts for a significant amount of the electricity used in office buildings, much of this use is unnecessary. Take advantage of natural light when possible and keep lights turned off. Remember to turn off lights when you leave a room. Talk to your office manager about installing motion detector sensors and replacing light bulbs with energy efficient T5 or T8 bulbs. The considerable economic benefits will be noticeable.

SHUT DOWN YOUR COMPUTER AND MONITOR

Shutting down your computer at the end of the day, when you are out to lunch, or are away from your desk for meetings or extended periods of time can reduce your annual computer-related energy consumption by up to 80%. For short periods of time, reduce energy use by making sure the sleep mode on your computer is activated.

THINK BEFORE YOU PRINT

Paper is the most commonly wasted item in the workplace, accounting for 72% of the waste stream. When possible, go paperless – save, transfer and reference files electronically instead of printing.

IF YOU HAVE TO PRINT, DO IT WISELY

If you must use paper, make sure to copy and print on both sides. Encourage your office manager to stock your office with recycled and chlorine-free paper. The production of recycled white paper creates 74% less air pollutants, 35% less water pollutants and 75% less process energy than that of paper from virgin fiber. Re-purpose used sheets into scrap paper or shred it to serve as packing material.

TURN OFF PRINTERS, COPIERS AND OTHER OFFICE ELECTRONICS AT THE END OF THE WORK DAY

Even when not in use, these machines drain immense amounts of energy. Plug them into power strips and make sure the last person to leave at night turns off the strips. This simple step will save both energy and money.



BRING IN A PLATE, UTENSILS, AND MUG FOR YOUR DESK

This small action can drastically reduce the amount of waste you create per year. Instead of disposable cups, drink your water and coffee from a reusable mug. When bringing your lunch to work, eat it with washable utensils on a reusable plate. Encourage officemates to do the same.

LITERALLY, GREEN THE OFFICE

Bring in plants, which absorb indoor pollution and increase the flow of oxygen while brightening the workspace.

RE-EVALUATE BUSINESS TRAVEL

Take the train, bus or subway when feasible instead of renting a car when traveling on business. Encourage your office to invest in videoconferencing and other technological solutions that can reduce employee travel.

DON'T BLOCK THE FLOW

Keep air vents clear of furniture, paper, files, and office supplies. It takes as much as 25% more energy to pump air into the workspace if the vents are blocked.

TALK TO YOUR OFFICE MANAGER...

...about providing separate bins for recycling paper, plastic, glass and metals. Printer and toner cartridges can also be recycled or refilled to save money and reduce packaging waste. Ask about purchasing office supplies and furniture made from recycled, recyclable or renewable materials. Donate unneeded office furniture to charitable organizations. Encourage the purchase of non-toxic and non-aerosol cleaning products to keep the indoor environment clean and healthy. Finally, select vendors based on their commitment to sustainable business practices.