

SEVEN STEPS TO A GREENER OFFICE

1. Power off.

Instead of letting computers and other electronics power down into sleep mode, institute a mandatory shut off of all computers and electronic devices every night after work. Use powerstrips instead of wall outlets and simply switch off the power strips before you leave.

Editor's note: Smart Strip power strips are less expensive than surge protectors and are claimed to pay for themselves in as little as six weeks.

2. Power down.

Disable screensavers on computers and allow idle computers to power down into hibernate or sleep mode if you are going to be away from your desk for an extended period of time during work hours.

3. Unscrew the office.

Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact florescent light (CFL) or light emitting diode (LED) bulbs. This goes for overhead lights, desk lamps, and pin lighting. Though more expensive, CFL and LED bulbs are far more efficient than regular lightbulbs, give off less heat, and last longer. CFLs are 10 times as efficient as incandescents, and many LEDs are 10 times as efficient as CFLs. However, due to the mercury content in CFL, bulbs require special disposal after their useful life.

Editor's note: Unscrew America is a nationwide campaign to replace incandescent bulbs and educate consumers on alternative lighting sources.

4. Better quench for thirst.

Install a water filter and do away with plastic bottles and paper cups. Supply employees with reusable beverage containers such as Nalgene, KleenKantene, or Sigg and encourage them to get water out of the faucet. For small companies, five gallon water dispensers may be more cost effective. Regardless, the result will be fewer plastic bottles piling up in landfills.

Editor's note: Lifesource carries a comprehensive water system for residential and commercial locations without the use of eco-unfriendly chemicals or salts. In addition to being endorsed by environmental groups, including Global Green and Children's Health Environmental Coalition, this company won the Preferred Water System award for the 2007 Rose Parade. The Lifesource website also provides a use and cost comparison chart for various filtration systems and bottled water.

5. Recycle.

This is the most obvious and, though it may be done at home, it is often forgotten at the office. Depending on the recycling services in your area, have bins for paper,

cardboard, plastic, glass, and aluminum. In addition, have an e-waste bin for electronics such as old cellphones, chargers, DVDs, CDs, inkjet cartridges, and computers. Often these items can be refurbished or harvested for parts. Check your local listings for e-recycle companies.

6. Buy recycled.

Purchase office supplies, particularly paper, that are made from recycled contents. Most major office supply stores carry a large selection of recycled products but recycled products can also be ordered from on-line companies.

Editor's Note: Have your products delivered to the office to cut down on your driving. Recycled Office Products carries a full line of recycled and remanufactured office products and will deliver for free for orders totally \$75 or more.

7. Ride share.

Encourage employees to trade off driving to work. They can meet at a designated location that is close to home then ride to work together. If you are a large company and have the resources, provide shuttle transportation.

Editor's Note: If you need help implementing alternative transportation, visit www.iCarpool.com (also available on Facebook) or www.eRideshare.com to find your best carpool or vanpool options. Both of these websites can get you to work or match you with other travelers for long-distance trips.

Source: <http://www.sheknows.com/health-and-wellness/articles/802639/go-green-at-the-office>