

# GREEN OFFICE GUIDE

## Purchasing

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- Purchase chlorine-free, high post-consumer-waste recycled paper & products
- Use refillable pens and tape dispensers instead of disposable ones
- Purchase recycled and non-chlorine-bleached paper towels and napkins
- Buy rechargeable batteries and a charger
- Consider products with minimum packaging; purchase in bulk (e.g. avoid individually packaged sugar and cream in the kitchen)
- Purchase products from local suppliers (to avoid long distance shipping and packaging) and from suppliers committed to environmental issues
- Buy locally grown organic food, and support caterers who do too (visit the [Local Harvest](#) site to find organic foods grown near you)
- Purchase fair-trade, organic coffee
- Use non-toxic, biodegradable cleaning supplies
- Look for EPA Energy Star and EPEAT certified options when purchasing new equipment or appliances
- Purchase a water filter to keep in the fridge when possible instead of using single use bottled water
- Work with printers who use responsible inks and papers (e.g. soy based inks & recycled content paper)

## Responsible paper usage

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- Keep mailing lists up-to-date and avoid duplicates (saves paper!)
- Reuse inter-office envelopes
- Edit your documents on-screen as much as possible to avoid printing multiple drafts
- Print and copy documents using the double-sided feature
- Use the reduction feature on a copier to fit more on a page
- Save paper by design: use narrower margins and smaller fonts when acceptable
- Use postcards for mailings when possible and use the smallest size envelope required
- Save ½ used sheets of office paper (sheets printed on only one side) to stock fax machines, use as scratch paper, and copy and print drafts (or whenever appropriate)
- Avoid using colored paper when possible
- Eliminate use of fax cover sheets; write on the fax itself or attach a fax Post-It
- Cancel junk mail and duplicate mailings. The Santa Clara County Recycling and Waste Reduction Committee has a free [Junk Mail Reduction Kit](#) you may download.



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## In the kitchen

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- Keep washable plates, mugs, glasses and silverware in the kitchen and avoid disposables
- Hang hand-towels in the kitchen (and bathroom) and use cloth napkins in place of paper ones
- Bring lunches in reusable rather than disposable containers
- Provide a dish-washing area to support staff efforts to use reusable containers
- Eat in the restaurant as opposed to carrying-out food, and don't accept Styrofoam containers
- Limit or eliminate "fast food" chain restaurants from eating options; provide suggestions for local or organic options
- Compost food waste

## Repair, reuse, recycle and proper disposal

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- Fix or donate broken furniture rather than sending it to a landfill
- Donate equipment and furniture to a resale store ([Salvation Army](#) offers free pick-up)
- Educate your office about recycling and proper waste management
- Print using lowest-quality print setting when appropriate to conserve ink and cartridges
- Have a "used goods area" within the office and include binders, folders, padded envelopes, cardboard boxes, disks, etc. -- use these before purchasing new supplies
- Set up a comprehensive office recycling program for paper, cardboard, glass, metals, and plastic; clearly label all recycling bins
- Recycle toner cartridges through the manufacturers' recycling program
- Dispose of hazardous materials and electronic waste properly. This includes cleaning products, fluorescent light bulbs, computers and electronics, drain cleaners, batteries, old cell phones, etc. (see [EH&S Hazardous Waste disposal guidelines](#))
- Recycle packing peanuts at campus Mail Services

## Indoor air quality

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- Conduct an air quality check
- Add plants to offices and use natural fertilizers
- Change air filters regularly
- Turn off air conditioning and open the windows on nice days
- Notify your building manager immediately if you suspect indoor air quality problems



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## Energy efficiency

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- Turn on “power-save” modes on equipment and appliances
- Turn off equipment during nights and weekends. Even when not in use, appliances use electricity.
- For windows that receive direct sunlight, close the blinds after work and on weekends to prevent excess heating in the summertime
- Open the windows and turn off the air conditioning on nice days
- Ensure heaters & radiators are not blocked by furniture
- Use a ceiling fan or other fan in the summer time with or without air conditioning. Fans use 98% less energy than AC and make you feel up to 6 degrees cooler.
- Replace flickering fluorescent lights promptly
- Turn off lights when exiting rooms

## Meetings and events

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- Support environmentally responsible hotels and meeting spaces
- Ensure that meetings and trainings are held at locations served by public transportation. Include train or bus directions on the invite.
- Label local and organic foods at events

## Transportation

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- Bike, walk, take public transportation, or carpool to work
- Use videoconferencing and conference calls instead of travel when possible

## QUESTIONS?

Contact us at [sustainability@caltech.edu](mailto:sustainability@caltech.edu)

or visit our website [sustainability.caltech.edu](http://sustainability.caltech.edu)

