

Environmental Stewardship For Every Person



You can reduce your impact on the environment while at home, out in your community, commuting to work, or working at your desk. Your individual leadership is invaluable everyday to protect our health and environment.

You've heard all the talk about **reducing our environmental footprint**, but, what does that really mean? How can you make a difference?

This sheet is meant to start you thinking about the actions you can take. The **"Every Person" section of the Environmental Stewardship Resource Guide (ESRG)** will be your resource for implementing these actions.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

You can start by asking yourself these simple questions:

- What do I really need?
- Can I do it with less?
- What can I reuse and recycle?
- What can I buy and do that saves resources and is less toxic or hazardous?

At Work

Our individual efforts, responsibilities, and everyday choices are exponentially expanded by our numbers as a community of over 2 million federal employees.

Ask your managers what your agency is doing! Know your environmental management system (EMS), your recycling program, and your environmentally preferable purchasing requirements.

Take Action!

Most of the actions you can take are right at your fingertips, simple to do, cost little or nothing, and save a lot. Here are some everyday actions to start with:

- use less paper;
- make double-sided copies when printing;
- recycle your paper, cardboard, and beverage containers;

- turn off lights when you leave a room and at your desk when you leave for the day;
- use the energy-saving settings on your computer and turn it off at night, including the monitor;
- reuse folders, including file, accordion, and hanging folders;
- eat waste-free meals by using less packaging and bringing your own dishes, cups, and utensils;
- use less water; and
- hold meetings with less paper and send the handouts electronically.

Purchase Environmentally Preferable Products and Services!

Whatever your job, you will likely need to order a product or service at some point. When doing so, ask that what your order is designated as environmentally preferable and contains recycled material.

- **Office Supplies:** Order recycled copy paper, file folders, remanufactured toner cartridges, writing tablets, envelopes, plastic office supplies, shipping and mailing products, awards and plaques, and other products you typically use every day.
- **Electronic Equipment:** Order computers, printers, copiers that are ENERGY STAR® compliant and keep them over a 4-year replacement cycle.
- **Green Meetings:** Require that meetings in your office as well as at hotels and conference centers follow environmental practices, such as having recycling receptacles for paper, beverage containers, and other products. Have meeting coordinators answer the 14 questions found in EPA's required green meeting acquisition regulation (found in the **"Green Meetings" section of the ESRG.**)



Start a "Green Team"!

A Green Team is a cross-organizational group of employees who have chosen to help lead an effort to improve the environmental performance of an office, division, or agency's operations; help implement its EMS; educate its



staff; and change behavior.

A Green Team's membership may include facilities staff, IT people, resource management and procurement staff, and anyone else who is committed to making a difference. If possible, Green Teams should also include building managers or landlords. Being all inclusive is one of the keys to getting wider participation and spreading the word to all employees on how to be excellent environmental stewards.

On The Way to Work

Walk, bike, or take public transportation to make the least impact when going to and from home and work. Find out what carpooling options are available in your area.

If you carpool:

- Ensure that your car or van is inspected regularly for emissions safety;
- Avoid letting the engine idle when you are parked;
- Use an alternative fuel vehicle or the most fuel efficient vehicle you can afford; and
- Take it easy on the gas pedal to get better gas mileage.

At Home

As in your office, you can reduce waste, recycle, and buy environmentally preferable products and services for your house and yard. You also can:

- Take steps to maintain the quality of your indoor air;
- Use less toxic and hazardous cleaning supplies;
- Use CFLs to save electricity;
- Install water saving devices on your appliances and fixtures that use water;
- Use native plants in your landscaping and gardening along with chemicals that are less toxic;
- Use rechargeable batteries;
- Set up a composting bin for yard and food waste;
- Use your community's recycling program; and
- Buy ENERGY STAR appliances and electronic equipment.



In Your Community

Bring your environmental practices out into your community.

- Patronize stores and businesses that require practices and sell products that are environmentally preferable;
- Promote environmentally preferable actions and practices at organizations with which you are affiliated, such as service groups, churches, schools, etc.;
- Find out what environmental programs are available in your community; and
- Encourage your local officials to institute increased environmental practices.

Resources

For a broader range of resources, please see each of the ESRG areas of responsibility.

At Work

For more about what you can do at work, visit <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/wycd/office.html>, or at EPA, <http://www.epa.gov/greeningepa/index.htm>.

See what a Green Team can do at <http://www.epa.gov/ne/green/about.html>.

At Home

Find tips for home safety, avoiding potential risks, and preventing pollution by recycling and conserving water and energy at <http://www.epa.gov/epahome/home.htm>.

Discover many other actions you can take at <http://www.newdream.org/>.

In Your Community

Find out what's going on where you live at EPA's Web site: <http://www.epa.gov>.

Look up your state environmental department at <http://www.epa.gov/epahome/state.htm>.

State and Regional waste programs are at <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/osw/regions.htm>.

Protect the environment while shopping by visiting the Green Shopping Guide at <http://www.epa.gov/epahome/shopping.htm>.

Traveling

On the Road: <http://www.epa.gov/epahome/trans.htm>.

Healthy Schools

Resources to address environmental health issues in schools are available at <http://cfpub.epa.gov/schools/index.cfm>.