



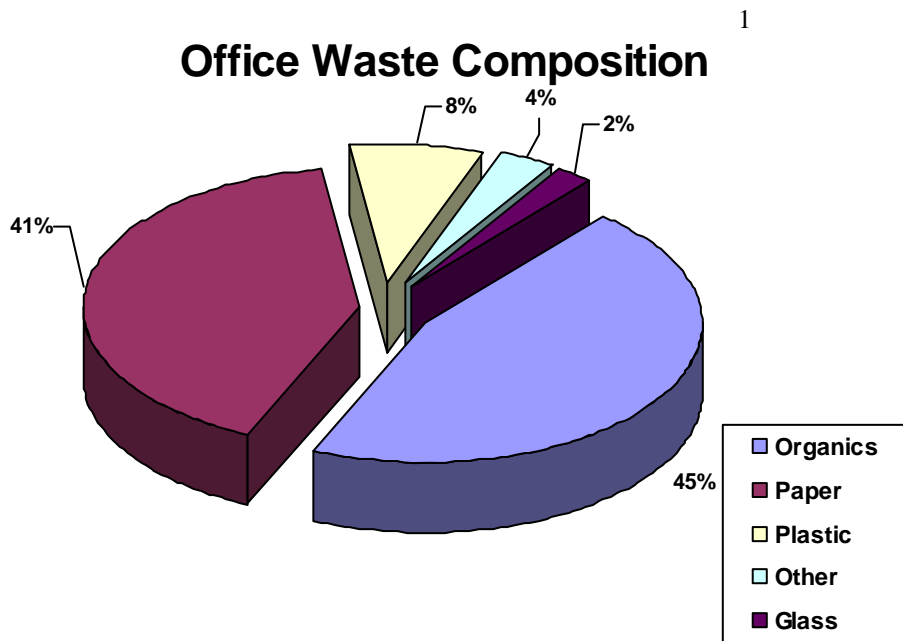
## GUIDE Series

# Environmental Tips for Calgary Businesses

Green Calgary is a non-profit organization striving to create healthy homes and communities for all Calgarians. The Commercial Environmental Services program assists businesses in reducing their environmental impact associated with waste. We offer the information, education, resources and tools necessary to divert waste from landfill and reach your waste diversion goals. Our one-on-one support allows us to understand your needs and customize services and recommendations for your business.

## Offices

This document has been prepared by Green Calgary's Commercial Environmental Services team as a guide for environmental actions that offices can take. While the main focus is on waste reduction and diversion we have also taken care to look into other issues such as energy, indoor air quality and green procurement steps that offices can take to reduce their overall environmental impact. For more information please contact [James Emerson](#) of Commercial Environmental Services at 403.230.1443 Ext 227.



**Did you know:** According to a City of Calgary Report, an estimated 1.45 tonnes of waste is generated by every person working in Calgary per year. By reducing waste output by half, one person can eliminate up to 750 kg of garbage going to landfills each year.<sup>2</sup>

## Solid Waste Tips

### ❖ **Recycle Paper Products**

Paper is an essential around the office, and while paper recycling is a well established practice, recycling is a voluntary action for companies, and large amounts of paper still end up in landfills. By actively recycling your paper products, reducing the amount of paper that your office uses and purchasing recycled content office paper, your business can save millions of trees from being cut down and help to preserve our forests.

#### **Action Ideas**

- Contact your property manager to find out if your building has a cardboard or paper recycling program.
- Contact your current cardboard hauler and ask if other paper products can be added to the bin.
- Contact at least two [paper recyclers](#) to get a quote for paper recycling.
- Insure that all employees have paper recycling bins at their desks.
- Contact Green Calgary's [Commercial Environmental Services](#) team for more information on setting up a paper recycling program for your office or the building.
- Buy recycled content paper (see Green procurement section below).

### ❖ **Start an Office Recycling Program**

At work, similar type of waste and can be generated that we would find in our homes. Start a recycling program in your office to capture the plastics, tin cans, beverage container and other recyclable materials that are generated at your work place.

#### **Action Ideas**

- Identify what materials your office generates that can be recycled. Many recyclable materials are generated in kitchen and other common use areas.
- Sort your recyclables at their source.
- Contact your property manager to find out if the building offers any recycling programs that you can use.
- Contact at least two [commercial multi-material recyclers](#) to get a quote on office recycling.
- Make sure that recycling bins are well placed and clearly labeled to avoid misuse and contamination of materials.
- Contact [James](#) of the Commercial Environmental Services Team for a free Visual Waste Assessment to help you get started.

- Consider having a [waste assessment](#) done for your office to see how well your current recycling programs are working. Contact [Gina](#) of the Commercial Environmental Services team for more information about waste assessments.
- Educate staff about the importance environmental action in the work place by inviting Green Calgary to perform a Waste at Work lunch and learn. Contact [James](#) for more information.

## ❖ **Eliminate Disposables**

Whether you're picking up lunch, going out for coffee or drinking a bottle of water provided by the company, we can't deny that disposable materials have found their way into our lives. Eliminate disposables in your corporate culture and look for reusable options instead.

### **Action Ideas**

- Give employees travel mugs, reusable water bottles or [eco clamshells](#) as gifts for the holidays. By having your company logo added to the item not only will you receive a little extra marketing but you'll also raise your profile as a green company.
- Eliminate bottled water and provide employees with a water cooler or a water filtration device.
- Make it fun by having internal challenges to see who can go the longest without using a disposable item. Reward the winners with gift certificates to local restaurants and coffee shops or with products from [Green Calgary's EcoStore](#).
- Provide employees with ceramic plates, coffee mugs and stainless steel cutlery for lunch breaks.
- Ask about using ceramic plates when hiring a caterer for corporate events.

**Did you know:** 47% of all the trees consumed in Canada are used to make paper and paper products such as disposable coffee cups.<sup>3</sup>

## **Energy Tips**

### ❖ **Reduce Energy Usage**

Energy reduction programs can be more difficult to measure and although individuals may not see the direct financial benefit, small changes in behaviors and habits can make a huge impact on energy efficiency and green house gas reduction.

### **Action Ideas**

- Wind Power your office using 100% [Bullfrog Power](#).<sup>4</sup>
- Ensure that lights are shut off when rooms are not in use. You can use signage to remind people to or have motion sensors installed that will shut off lights automatically when rooms are not in use.
- Ask your IT department about changing the settings on computers to conserve energy.

- Check to see if you are able to shut down your computer at night.
- Have all electronics plugged into power bars that can be shut down at night to eliminate [phantom load](#).<sup>5</sup>
- Use Energy Stars [Guidelines for Energy Management Overview](#)<sup>6</sup> to help reduce energy in your office.
- Get an energy audit or review for your office. Contact the Commercial Environmental Services team for more information on who can perform an energy audit for your office or building.

## **Indoor Air Quality Tips**

### ❖ **Switch to Green Cleaning**

Many cleaning products contain harmful chemicals that can have a negative impact on indoor air quality and your health. Know what kinds of cleaning products are being used in your office and help keep your employees and co-workers healthy.

#### **Action Ideas**

- Contact your custodial staff to find out if they have options for green cleaning products or switch to a cleaning company that offers green cleaning.
- Change bathroom soaps to an environmentally conscious brand. A list of institutional hand soaps can be found on the [EcoLogo Product list](#).<sup>7</sup>
- Use green cleaners for your dish soaps and dishwasher. These products can be purchased at [Green Calgary's EcoStore](#).

### ❖ **A Greener Office**

There are many materials found in our indoor environments that can contribute to “sick building syndrome” a term used to describe the decline in indoor air quality. Carpets, paints and even the desks we sit at can all release various chemical compounds into the air, having an adverse effect on our health. Protect yourself and your co-workers by having plants in your office which have been shown to clean the air of harmful chemicals and improve indoor air quality.

#### **Action Ideas**

- Get input from staff on having plants in the office and where they should be placed.
- Choose from a list of [the top plants](#)<sup>8</sup> that have been proven to improve indoor air quality.
- Find the plant champion in your office who can incorporate caring for office plants into their weekly duties.
- Hire an indoor landscaping company to supply you with the plants you want and keep them healthy.

**Did you know:** A bamboo palm can remove up to 76,707 milligrams of formaldehyde from the air over a 24 hour period. Formaldehyde, a chemical used in many materials found in our offices and homes, is off gassed into the air which can cause headaches, irritation of the eyes and throat and has been shown to cause asthma and certain kinds of cancer.<sup>9</sup>

## Green Procurement Tips

### ❖ **Buy Green!**

Purchasing recycled content helps support the recycling market while at the same time reduces the demand of raw material extraction, which is by far one of the most destructive practices and biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. By purchasing recycled content products, products that are easily recyclable and products that use less energy, your business can make a significant impact.

#### **Action Ideas**

- Purchase paper with 100% recycled content. Green Calgary's [EcoStore](#) carries paper with 100% recycled content as well as other green office supplies.
- When replacing or purchasing any electrical office equipment choose [products with the Energy Star label](#).<sup>10</sup>
- Implement a green procurement policy at your work place. You can find a template for a green procurement policy on the [Recycling Council of Alberta's website](#).<sup>11</sup>
- Consider all products and services in your green procurement policy.

## Green Office Resources

Please check out the following links for more ideas on how you can green your office.

### [David Suzuki Office Essentials Toolkit](#)

<http://www.davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/green-your-workplace/interactive-toolkit/>

### [The City of Calgary's Sustainable Environmental and Ethical Procurement Policy \(SEEPP\)](#)

[http://www.calgary.ca/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS\\_0\\_0\\_104\\_0\\_0\\_35/http%3B/content.calgary.ca/CCA/City+Hall/Business+Units/Finance+and+Supply/Policies/Sustainable+Environmental+and+Ethical+Procurement+Policy+SEEPP/Sustainable+Environmental+and+Ethical+Procurement+Policy+SEEPP.htm](http://www.calgary.ca/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_104_0_0_35/http%3B/content.calgary.ca/CCA/City+Hall/Business+Units/Finance+and+Supply/Policies/Sustainable+Environmental+and+Ethical+Procurement+Policy+SEEPP/Sustainable+Environmental+and+Ethical+Procurement+Policy+SEEPP.htm)

### [BOMA Calgary](#)

<http://boma.ca/>

## [Eco Efficiency Fact Sheet: Eco Efficiency in Offices/Institutions](#)

[http://eco-efficiency.management.dal.ca/Files/Business\\_Fact\\_Sheets/office\\_fs.pdf](http://eco-efficiency.management.dal.ca/Files/Business_Fact_Sheets/office_fs.pdf)

## [Vancouver](#)

<http://vancouver.ca/oneday/takeAction/atWork/index.htm>

## [REAP](#)

<http://www.reapcalgary.com/webpage/1002106/1000445>

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<sup>1</sup> Green Calgary Waste Assessment

<sup>2</sup> Executive Summary, The City of Calgary ICI / C&D Waste Characterization Study, January 2006

<sup>3</sup> [State of the World's Forests 2007: Annex](#)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bullfrogpower.com/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~recycle/ssec/download/Phantom%20Load.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=guidelines.guidelines\\_index](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=guidelines.guidelines_index)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.ecologo.org/en/certifiedgreenproducts/details.asp?product\\_type\\_id=165&cat=1](http://www.ecologo.org/en/certifiedgreenproducts/details.asp?product_type_id=165&cat=1)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.zone10.com/nasa-study-house-plants-clean-air.html>

<sup>9</sup> [Interior Landscape Plants for Indoor Air Pollution Abatements](#)

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=products.pr\\_find\\_es\\_products](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=products.pr_find_es_products)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.recycle.ab.ca/images/stories/Download/greenprocurementtemplate.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.designpsych.com/office\\_plants\\_reduce\\_stress.htm](http://www.designpsych.com/office_plants_reduce_stress.htm)

<sup>13</sup> <http://ecology.com/features/paperchase/>