

Sustainable Practices in the Law Office

© OLSF 2009

Oregon Lawyers for a Sustainable Future has created this checklist to assist the law office in (1) assessing its current practices and (2) considering new practices that might be adopted.

GENERAL

- A sustainability policy has been adopted by the firm.
- Employees have been educated about portions of this policy that relate to their work, and this education is part of new employee training.
- Discussions have been held with a representative of the building owner regarding the OLSF law office tool "Best Practices of Office Building Management." and "Guidelines for Tenant Improvements."

RECYCLING/COMPOSTING

- Desk-side recycling boxes are at each workstation.
- Trash cans are not at each workstation but only at central locations.
- Containers are available for bottles, cans, newspapers, magazines, and cardboard, and a procedure has been established for their recycling.
- A procedure has been established for recycling non-reusable items not accepted by the garbage hauler, such as Tyvek envelopes, batteries, plastic bags, and electronics.
- Mixed-material items, such as a paper notebook with a metal or plastic spine, are broken down to maximize recycling.
- Compost bins have been placed in the kitchens for food scraps and contaminated paper.

PAPER REDUCTION

- Office policy states that all copy and print jobs should be double sided unless otherwise specified.
- Copiers and printers are set to duplex automatically.
- Office policy on data and document storage is intended to minimize the use of paper.
- For court and agency filings, policy requires electronic filings where allowed and favors double-sided hard copies.
- Boxes for paper printed on only one side have been set next to central printers, and employees are directed to reuse such paper for printing drafts, making note pads, or other purposes.
- Faxes are received and routed electronically.
- Documents are processed electronically rather than printing hard copies, for example, using scan option on copier.
- Letter-sized paper, files, and pouches have replaced legal-sized items.
- Procedures are in place for keeping mailing lists up-to-date so as not to waste paper.
- Office policy encourages sharing of phone and reference books (e.g., dictionaries, statutes) or use of online sources.
- Firm is undertaking the ABA Climate-Challenge "best practices" for paper management.

PURCHASING SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS

- Copy/printer paper, and other writing paper products have 100% post-consumer recycled content.

- Office policy gives preference for products with recycled content whenever available at a cost of up to 15% more than the same item without recycled content.
- Paper towels have 100% post-consumer recycled content.
- File folders have a minimum of 30% post-consumer recycled content.
- Office policy gives preference for Energy Star office equipment.
- Coffee is organic and shade grown.
- Coffee, sugar, creamer, salt, and pepper are purchased in bulk rather than in single-serving containers.
- Suppliers have been notified about firm's purchasing policy.

PREFERRING SUSTAINABLE SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Soy-based ink is specified for outsourced print jobs.
- Office policy encourages the use of lunch caterers that minimize disposables and purchase locally grown, organic food.
- Office policy encourages personnel traveling on business to rent fuel-efficient cars.
- Office policy encourages hiring event planners with expertise in sustainable events.

ELIMINATING DISPOSABLES

- Durable plates, cups, glasses, utensils, coasters, and table mats are provided in kitchen and conference rooms.
- Pitchers with tap water, rather than bottled water, are provided in conference rooms. Chilled tap water is available in the kitchens.

REUSING EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

- An internal reuse center has been established for equipment and supplies such as computers, printers, binders, file folders, etc.
- Remanufactured cartridges for laser printers are purchased, and old cartridges are sent out for reuse.
- Old office equipment, furniture, and supplies are sold or donated for reuse.

REDUCING TOXIC PRODUCTS

- Unbleached and undyed paper towels and napkins are purchased for at least 50% of firm supply.
- Kitchen cleaners of low toxicity and high biodegradability are purchased.

REDUCING ENERGY

- Office policy calls for individual computers and printers to be turned off at the end of each day.
- Procedures are in place for shared copy machines and printers to be turned off, or put in standby mode, at the end of each day.
- Timers have been installed, or procedures are in place, for turning off lights.
- Monitors are set to go to sleep after 15 minutes, or personnel have been instructed to turn off monitors when leaving the office for 15 minutes or more.
- Compact fluorescent light bulbs have replaced incandescent bulbs in task lighting.
- Office policy encourages reducing (a) the need for business travel, through teleconferencing and other strategies, and (b) carbon emissions of required business travel.
- Firm is participating in the ABA Climate-Challenge Energy Star program to reduce energy (or electricity, if a tenant,) by 10 percent.

PROVIDING COMMUTER INCENTIVES

- A subsidy of at least 50% is provided for bus passes.

- Monetary incentives are provided for bike commuters.
- Showers are available for bike commuters.
- Secure bike storage is provided for bike commuters.
- Employees are allowed to charge the firm for cab fare when working beyond public transportation commute times.
- Firm does not provide free parking for any personnel.
- Firm has purchased one or more car-sharing memberships.

OTHER

- If firm has a workplace giving program, employees have the option of giving through Earth Share or other environmental nonprofits.
- Educational speakers on sustainability are invited and promoted as a part of firm training.

Oregon Lawyers for a Sustainable Future is a project of the Center for Earth Leadership.
319 SW Washington, Ste 400, Portland, OR 97204 • info@earthleaders.org • 503-227-2315
The law office tools are located at www.earthleaders.org/olsf/office_practices.