

## [Going Green In Your Office The Easy Way](#)

Many of us want to be responsible citizens of the Earth. We think about the effects our lifestyles have on the environment. We are concerned about global warming. We want to ensure our children's future on this planet is one that still has clean air to breathe, an abundance of trees and wildlife, and clean water to drink. However, many of us also think that the sacrifices might be too great to "go green" in our own office. Good news. It's not as difficult as you think.

There are 3 areas where you can make a significant impact without significant expense or inconvenience: paper, lights, and electronics.

The average American office worker throws out about 150 pounds of paper per year. Paper manufacturing contributes to the deforestation of the planet and in America is responsible for 35 million tons of CO2 a year. So what can you do? Buy recycled paper. Make full use of that paper by printing on both sides and/or using paper that is only printed on one side for scratch paper. Do your proofreading and edits on your computer before printing to reduce the number of prints you make. Re-use file folders by placing new labels over the old ones. All of these changes are easy to make but have a big impact. Pretty painless, right?

Another way you can go green in your office is as easy as changing a light bulb. In fact, it is changing a light bulb. Incandescent bulbs use 4 times more energy than is necessary to produce light. Halogen lights can get as hot as 1,100 degrees Fahrenheit. That's hot enough to cook an egg! Alternately, Energy Star certified compact fluorescent lights (CFL's) use 75% less energy to produce the same amount of light, last 10 times longer and produce less heat. If you feel like you need even more reason to switch to CFL's, consider that you will also save money over the lifetime of the bulb. Once you have made the switch to energy efficient bulbs, make sure lights are turned off when they are not needed. A great way to ensure that this happens is with motion sensors that will turn the lights off when everyone has left the room.

38% of all of the carbon dioxide emissions come from the electricity we generate. That electricity is used to power all sorts of things. A major drain on our electricity is all of our office equipment such as computers, copiers, printers, and fax machines. When going green with your electronics, you need to look at 3 factors. You need to consider the waste that is created in the manufacturing of the products, the effects on the environment when you use the products, and the waste that is created when you are done with the products. That may seem like a lot to think about but if you follow these simple guidelines, you will be able to minimize the negative impact your office equipment has on the environment.

The manufacturing of electronics uses a lot of resources including electricity, raw materials, and water. Electronics also account for billions of pounds of municipal waste each year. Just a few of the contaminants that electronics create are toxic heavy metals, lead, PCB's, mercury, and various acids. To lessen your office's affect on the number of new pieces of equipment that are manufactured, as well as end up in land fills, buy all-in-one machines that combine multiple functions into one. Whenever possible, get rid of machines completely by using services such as Internet fax. With an Internet fax service you get rid of the fax machine completely, as well as reduce the amount of paper and ink that gets consumed. Another way to decrease waste is to recycle machines that are no longer working and donate those that do to charities where they will stay in use.

25% of the total electricity used by all commercial buildings in the US is consumed by office buildings. When buying any new office equipment, look for Energy Star certified machines. This will make a huge difference in the amount of electricity that is used to run your office. For example, an Energy Star certified computer is going to be 52% more efficient than a standard one. Laptops also use a lot less energy than desktops, so consider whether this is a viable option for your office. Energy efficient machines are also going to have stand by options that will power down or go into sleep mode to conserve energy when not in use. Once the office is closing for the day, make sure that all equipment is powered off.

Taking these steps will get you on your way to going green in your office. And as I promised, they will help you make a significant impact without significant cost or inconvenience to you and your employees. And you thought going green was going to be hard.

### **About the Author**

Brandi Cummings is an expert author on various topics relating to small and home based businesses. Take the first step to going green in your office and visit [www.Fax800.com](http://www.Fax800.com) for [Internet fax](#) solutions.

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