

OFFICE & ADMINISTRATION

There are many financial and environmental benefits to be gained through more efficient use of resources in the office or administration section of your business - especially in relation to the use of disposable items such as paper and stationary items. To achieve these savings, three key areas can be addressed:

- Using less paper
- Purchasing recycled products
- Recycling used products

Minimising energy use in office areas can also contribute to significant financial savings for your business.

Using Less Paper

The following strategies can reduce the amount of paper and other materials consumed by administrative and promotional activities.

Electronic communications

Electronic communications can be used to advantage to avoid consumption of paper. Practices that can be adopted include the following:

- proof read documents on screen to avoid printing hard copies
- use e-mail for internal and external communication, particularly when documents are being revised
- circulate memos by e-mail instead of hard copy.
- send faxes by modem directly from computers rather than printing hard copy first

Smart use of paper

Implement the following logical paper conservation practices:

- double-sided photocopying and printing
- reduction photocopies
- post notices to staff on central notice boards
- print drafts and memos on used paper
- re-use large envelopes by applying new address labels

Purchasing Recycled Products

By putting in place a policy to purchase recycled stationery products, your business will stimulate demand for recycled goods, helping to keep waste paper, cardboard and plastic out of landfill. Products vary in the percentage of recycled content they contain, but any products with recycled content are preferable to those made from virgin fibre or materials.

ECO-Buy Business Program

ECO-Buy is a government funded organisation established to encourage the purchasing of green products across local government and business, encouraging organisations to buy products that are less damaging to our environment and human health.

ECO-Buy Business membership is open to Victorian businesses employing over 100 staff. However, smaller businesses are able to utilise the following ECO-Buy resources:

- ECO-Find – an online database listing thousands of green products
- ECO-Bonus – discounts and incentives from specific suppliers
- ECO-Guide – template purchasing policy, green shopping list, environmental specifications for tenders
- ECO-Expos – invitations to expos to see, hear, touch and smell green products
- Newsletter – access to the ECO-Buy newsletter *What Goes Around Comes Around*

For more information go to the [ECO-Buy website](#) or contact the ECO-Buy Business Program Manager on (03) 9667 5587.

Paper & Cardboard

Using recycled stock for promotional material can be a valuable means of communicating the environmental initiatives of your business to customers and improving your corporate image. There are many good-quality recycled paper products available – this fact sheet is printed on recycled paper. For a comprehensive list of suppliers go to the [ECO-Find database](#) and type 'paper' into the Keyword box.

Contrary to popular belief, the vast majority of printers, fax machines and photocopiers accept recycled paper products. If you experience difficulties, try changing to another paper stock with a different surface texture. When purchasing new equipment, specify a model which accepts recycled paper.

Other Office Items

Stationary items, furniture and other office products can also be developed with recycled content. Utilise the [ECO-Find database](#) to find products and suppliers.

Recycling Used Products

Most regions in Victoria have pick-up recycling for glass, some types of plastic, cans and paper. Depending on the size of your business, this pick-up service may extend to commercial enterprises. If your area is lacking this service, be prepared to lobby your local Council by writing to the Mayor. The majority of recycling collectors will give assistance to customers setting up a recycling program as well as provide equipment including cardboard collection containers, wheelie bins and promotional material. For a comprehensive list of recyclers go to [Sustainability Victoria](#) and sort by City.

Paper recycling

Almost all paper products can be recycled if they are uncontaminated. Successful office recycling programs often resulting in the diversion of more than 70% of paper and cardboard from the mixed garbage stream.

The following paper products cannot be recycled

- Thermal fax paper
- Carbon paper
- Waxed paper
- Facial tissues
- Paper cups and plates
- Paper towels

Communicating to Staff

An effective, ongoing communication and education program is crucial to the success of any recycling program. Make sure all staff know how the system functions and are given feedback on the success of the program. In large businesses, a formal education program may be necessary with information about the program incorporated into regular staff training. A great way of maintaining enthusiasm is to put up a graph showing progress towards a target, or consider donating a proportion of any cost savings to a local conservation group chosen by staff.

Energy Use in the Office

The main items that use electricity in an office are the office equipment, lighting, heating and cooling, and boiling water units. For information on lighting, heating and cooling, refer to the relevant fact sheets.

Office Equipment

The energy consumption of different models of computers, printers, photocopiers and other office equipment varies widely. So too do ongoing costs such as toner and special paper. When selecting equipment, choose those that comply with the Energy Star standard – see box below. These generally have automatic sleep modes and low idle power.

Computers

Desktop personal computers use about 100 Watts while operating.

- Screen savers do not save energy and should not be used as they use energy needlessly.
- Energy saving features can be programmed with most computers, including those connected to a network.
- Switch the computer off when it is not required. This will reduce the risk of hard disk failure and improve security on systems with password protection.

Printers and Photocopiers

In many printers and photocopiers, the heaters which are used to fuse ink onto the paper are kept warm continuously.

- Enable the energy saving mode on printers and photocopiers.
- Switch equipment off when it is not required.

ENERGY STAR® standard

ENERGY STAR is an international standard for energy efficient office equipment including:

- computers
- printers
- photocopiers
- televisions
- audio products
- VCR and DVD players



By buying equipment that complies with the ENERGY STAR standard, and making sure its energy saving features are enabled, you can save money on your electricity bills and help the environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. ENERGY STAR reduces the amount of energy consumed by a product by either automatically switching it into a 'sleep' mode when it's not being used and/or reducing the amount power used when in 'standby' mode.

While most office equipment now has the *potential* to save energy in this way (ie. it is ENERGY STAR compliant), not all machines, particularly PCs, have actually been *enabled* so that the energy saving features are activated. For step-by-step instructions for enabling ENERGY STAR features on computers, go to <http://www.energystar.gov.au/consumers/stepbystep>

If your TV, VCR or DVD complies with the ENERGY STAR standard, it will consume around 75% less energy in standby mode than standard products do. Because products like these spend more than 60% of their time on standby, this can add up to a significant reduction in your energy bills.

Hot Water Urns

Install a simple plug-in timer on the boiling water urn in your office kitchen. This automatically turns the system off at night and on weekends, so you're not boiling water for no reason. Timers are available from hardware stores for around \$ 8.