

LAW OFFICES CAN GO GREEN, TOO!

ABA's Section of Environment, Energy and Resources ("SEER) can help your office "go green." SEER has partnered with the Environmental Protection Agency, and together, as part of the "Law Office Climate Challenge" program, SEER and the EPA offer these tips and programs:

- Adopt best practices for office paper management by reducing paper usage, increasing recycled content in paper purchased, or increasing recycling. Specifically, law offices can purchase office paper with at least 30% recycled content, recycle discarded office paper, and use double-sided copying and printing at least for drafts and internal documents.
- Participate in EPA's WasteWise program, which encourages organizations to save energy by reducing waste, and adopt best practices for office paper management. To learn more: <http://www.abanet.org/environ/climatechallenge/wastewise.shtml>
- Participate in EPA's Green Power Partnership program by purchasing energy from renewable sources to cover at least a portion of electricity usage. Specifically, a law office can agree to purchase a minimum amount of megawatt hours of green power products, which are electric power products generated by certain types of new sources of renewable energy. For more information on the GreenPower program: <http://www.abanet.org/environ/climatechallenge/greenpower.shtml>
- Participate in EPA's ENERGY STAR program, which encourages law offices to reduce energy use by at least 10% through, among other things, the purchase of ENERGY STAR-designated equipment and implementation of better energy management practices. This program has features that recognize the issues associated with tenant law offices. To learn how your office or your building can participate: <http://www.abanet.org/environ/climatechallenge/energystar.shtml>

From Managed Print Solutions (<http://inksolutions.wordpress.com/>), here are some other office tips:

- Turn off the lights. Remember to hit the switch on your way out for that well-deserved lunch break. The energy savings from 10 million employees turning off unneeded lights for 30 minutes a day is enough to illuminate 50 million square feet of office space.
- Use re-manufactured ink and toner cartridges. About 110% of all offices in the world have at least one printer. Many more have several printers in the office that do a lot of printing. First of all, you can save yourself a ton of cash. An average small or medium office stands to save \$1,000- \$2,500 easily per year by using this eco-friendly alternative.

- Put your monitor to sleep. Whether it shows off your vacation photos or a cool 3D animation, a computer screen saver is not at all designed for energy efficiency. It's intended to save your screen from "burn in," not to save energy. Because monitors are responsible for more than one-third of a computer's energy consumption — even with screen savers — the best way to conserve energy is to set the monitor to sleep or power off when you're away for an extended period. If you're gone for 5-10 minutes, enjoy a screen saver. Any longer than that, put the monitor to sleep.
- Use the stairs. Your brain gets exercise all day, why not exercise your body? Get your heart pumping by taking the stairs instead of the elevator. It's good for your health, and it saves electricity.
- Make your printer's toner last. Being cheap is a first date no-no, but it's okay to be frugal at the office. When printing rough drafts or documents for internal purposes, change the printer's settings to economy mode and avoid color if possible. Econo-mode uses up to 50 percent less toner and prints twice as many pages as other higher quality settings. Duplex printing also uses half the amount of paper.
- Provide incentives for commuters. Free food and a year-end bonus are nice perks, but to really make workers happy, help ease their daily commute. The government rewards businesses that encourage their staff to carpool, bicycle, or walk to work under the Commuter Choice Program (<http://www.commuterchoice.com/>). Telecommuting and flexible work hours can also save employers by reducing absences and job retention costs.
- Recycle and reuse paper. Americans toss out about 35 million tons of paper each year. Buck the trend and start recycling — not only standard white printer paper, but all of the magazines, manila folders, and colored post-it notes that decorate your space. If it tears, it can be recycled. Recycled paper manufacturing generates 74 percent less air pollution, and saves trees, water, and energy. To salvage papers that are printed on one side only, flip them over and use for incoming faxes.
- Purchase 100 percent post-consumer waste, chlorine-free paper. Take note when buying paper — the higher the percentage of post-consumer waste, the larger the amount of recycled material is contained in the paper stock. This means that 100 percent post-consumer waste paper is made entirely from recycled products. Also, chlorine used for bleaching is one of the biggest polluters in the paper-making process. Choose non-chlorinated paper, which has the same quality as the bleached variety.
- Recycle and reuse office supplies. Do as Mom says and clean your plate, literally. Washing and reusing the plastic dishes and cutlery you get with take-away food is an easy way to cut down on waste at work. Better yet, pack your lunch in reusable containers and pocket your hard-earned dollars! Skip the paper (or worse, Styrofoam) cups and refill your travel mug at the nearby coffee shop instead. It may even get you

a discount. Besides aluminum cans and glass bottles, there are many other supplies stashed in and around your desk that are recyclable, such as batteries, printer cartridges, DVDs, CDs, and more.

- Curb phantom electricity. Many appliances still consume energy even when turned off. Items left plugged into the wall, such as a cell phone charger or laptop adapter, can leak more than 20 watts of power. In the United States alone, “phantom electricity” emits roughly 12 million tons of carbon into the atmosphere. Avoid this by plugging office equipment into a power strip and turning it off at night and on weekends.

Finally, don’t print everything. Create folders for emails that correspond to cases and save them rather than printing them. Download your research and organize it on your hard drive or server. You will find this may actually help you be a better lawyer, as you’ll begin to create your own database of only the “good” cases and statutes!

Going green is just for tree huggers; it’s for all of us. Do your part, even if you do just one or two of the items listed here. Good luck and GO GREEN!

–Publisher