



## ***Tips to Reduce Pollution for Offices, Retail, Restaurants, and the Faith Community***

### **Reduce Pollution, Waste and Other Materials**

- Use less toxic cleaners that are more environmentally-friendly.
- Do not dispose of hazardous waste such as petroleum, unused paints, or solvents in the trash, down the sink or down an outdoor storm drain. Contact Southeastern Public Service Authority's Hazardous Waste Collection Facilities at 420-4700 to learn how to dispose of these materials properly.
- Eliminate chemicals, fertilizers and pesticides on grounds. Excess lawn fertilizers contribute to a massive algal bloom that emerges each summer in the Elizabeth River sometimes resulting in fish kills.
- If you are a restaurant, donate food and scraps to a local compost facility and/or donate surplus sanitary food to a food bank or shelter.
- Use a first-in first-out inventory policy for raw materials to prevent them from spoiling. Rotate perishable stock at every delivery to minimize waste. Strict inventory control is the most effective and cost efficient way to prevent waste.
- Serve draft beer and fountain soft drinks instead of cans and bottles to reduce costs and waste. Use refillable containers for sugar, cream, salt, pepper, ketchup and condiments.
- Specify that products be delivered in returnable crates, racks, and/or containers. Contact vendors to determine if this option is available and discuss this and other packaging waste reduction strategies with your suppliers.
- Replace disposable cups, plates and utensils with those that are washable to reduce waste. Restaurants consider alternative "take-out" containers such as foil and compostable products.
- Go digital or reduce paper use by printing and copying less or copying on both sides of paper. The average U.S. office worker goes through 10,000 sheets of copy paper a year.
- Have an outdoor ashtray or cigarette "butt" can for smokers to reduce litter.

### **Reduce Travel & Transportation Impacts and Realize Fuel Savings**

- Implement a "No-idle" policy (if applicable). Idling cars and trucks emit air pollutants that are responsible for a wide range of environmental and health problems, including global warming, smog, acid rain, and respiratory illnesses. An EPA study revealed that one hour of idling can burn a whole gallon of fuel and release almost 20 pounds of carbon into the atmosphere.
- Choose alternative transportation will help the river. As you might expect, vehicles are a large contributor of carbon dioxide. Encourage employees to:
  - Offer preferred parking to carpoolers and/or hybrid vehicles

- Bike or walk to work
- Take mass transit
- Telecommute
- Teleconference
- Buy locally to minimize transportation costs and impacts.
- Plant trees when you or your employees travel. Here are some guidelines:
  - 1 tree every 2,000 miles by car
  - 1 tree every 1,300 miles by plane
  - 1 tree every 100 gallons of gasoline
  - 1 tree every 1,000 kilowatt-hours (one kWh = 1.124 pounds CO2)

### **Implement a Recycling Program**

- Recycle paper, aluminum, glass, plastic and cardboard. Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to run a TV for three hours or to light one 100 watt bulb for 20 hours. As reported by conservation.org, forty percent of all solid waste is generated from a variety of paper products. Office paper comprises a quarter of that waste, and less than 20 percent of office wastepaper in the U.S. is recovered for recycling.
- Recycle toner and ink cartridges and buy remanufactured ones. According to Office Depot, each remanufactured toner cartridge "keeps approximately 2.5 pounds of metal and plastic out of landfills...and conserves about a half-gallon of oil."
- Purchase recycled content paper or paper certified FSC (Forestry Stewardship Council).
- Restaurants should collect and send used grease to a licensed hauler for recycling into biofuels. Companies will often provide storage barrels and free pick-up service. Ensure that grease traps and interceptors are properly maintained. Never hot flush through a grease trap.

### ***Only Rain Down the Storm Drain***

- Keep everything out of the storm drain except rain. The Number 1 source of pollution to the Elizabeth River is runoff from rain. Urban storm drains typically send the river a "toxic soup" of oils and pollutants from the roads and roof, while excess nutrients is carried from lawns – not just fertilizers, but leaves, grass clippings and dog waste.
- Harvest rain water in rain barrels or cisterns to water plants or other non-potable needs.
- Look for opportunities to capture and treat stormwater. A rain garden is a landscaped area with special soils to naturally absorb and filter rain water.
- Reduce impervious surface through shared parking areas, porous pavement or pavers, or even a vegetated green roof.
- Help geese migrate by not feeding them. Resident Canada geese populations have increased dramatically here and their poop contains harmful bacteria that can wash into the river and contribute to unswimmable conditions.
- Restaurants should clean equipment such as floor mats, exhaust filters, garbage cans, carts, or tray racks in a designated indoor area such as a janitor/utility/mop sink or floor area with a drain connected to the sanitary sewer. Never pour wash water down a storm drain or gutter.

### ***Conserve Energy and Save Money***

- Buy Energy Star appliances, products and lights.

- Install motion sensors in less occupied spaces.
- Tune-up the heating and cooling systems to improve efficiency. Insulate water heaters, and set the hot water temperatures to the lowest practical temperature. Maximize insulation and weather-strip leaky doors and windows.
- Turn off non-essential lights, appliances, and computers.
- Set air conditioning thermostats in summer up to 78 degrees when you are there and 85 degrees or off when you are away and down to 68 degrees or below in winter. (For each degree, you'll save up to 5% on your heating/cooling costs.)
- Install a programmable thermostat, it will likely pay for itself within one year.
- Replace the light bulbs in ceiling fixtures with “green tips” which contain less mercury than counterparts. New tubular fluorescent bulbs (T-8’s) are 20-25% more efficient than their predecessors (T-12’s).
- Replace desktop lamps with compact fluorescent light bulbs which use about 75 percent less energy than standard incandescent bulbs and last up to 10 times longer. Savings total about \$30 or more in electricity costs over each bulb's lifetime.
- Conduct an intentional audit or review of the facility’s energy and resource use. This could be as informal as a walk through the building with fresh eyes, or as comprehensive as a full-blown facilities audit. The information will be very useful in setting goals and measuring results. Establish policies about conserving energy and post prompts such as signage on light switches to “turn off lights.”

### ***Conserve Water and Save Money***

- Replace old faucets, shower heads, toilets, washing machines, and dishwashers with water saving features, such as low-flow or retrofit if possible.
- Check for leaky faucets and toilets, and then repair them immediately. Did you know that if one faucet is dripping at the rate of one drop per second, you can expect to waste 7 gallons of water per day. That adds up to over 2,500 gallons per year.
- Only run dishwashers and/or washing machines when they are full.
- Never pour grease down the sink. Fats, oils and grease cool and harden, causing sewer pipes to clog and overflow. As a result, raw sewage can wash into the river when it rains. Report sewer overflows: Chesapeake 382-1489, Norfolk 823-1000, Portsmouth 393-8691, Virginia Beach 385-1470, or Virginia Department of Environmental Quality 518-2000 (or 1-800-468-8892).

### ***Purchase Green for Healthier Living***

- Choose less toxic materials such as wood products from certified sustainable forests, furniture, carpeting, and paint that are free of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and other products with less chemicals and off-gassing.
- Consider using recycled materials such as recycled carpet and reclaimed wood.
- Buy locally-sourced materials to reduce the travel impacts.
- Buy food and other products with reusable or recyclable packaging. Buy in bulk and avoid excess packaging (even recyclable packaging requires energy and resources to create). Look for refillable containers. Also, concentrated products use less packaging.
- Buy fair trade or organic coffee as well as local or organic food.

### ***Engage Employees, Customers, the Community and/or the Congregation in Environmental Efforts***

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- Establish a “Green Team” committee to help your organization to go green. Empowering employees and constituents has shown to further sustainability efforts. Provide opportunity for cross-functional brainstorming and help implement. Start with low-hanging fruit and make sure you celebrate successes.
- Mentor others by recruiting a fellow facility into the River Star Businesses program or partnering with a River Star School.
- Provide expertise to another River Star partner on an environmental project. Let us know if you are interested in becoming a mentor.

### ***Enhance Wildlife Habitat***

- For a comprehensive approach, refer to Elizabeth River Project’s *Wildlife Habitat Guide for Restoration and Landscaping in the Elizabeth River Watershed* (142 pages). The guide not only lists native trees and shrubs for Hampton Roads, but even shows you how to construct an osprey platform! Visit [RiverStarBusinesses.org/Publications](http://RiverStarBusinesses.org/Publications)