

Everyday P2 Tips

What you can do

At Work

Tips:

- Reuse lunch containers and lunch bags.
- Start or support an office recycling program.
- Purchase energy efficient (Energy Star) lights, copiers and appliances. Energy efficiency means fewer emissions contributing to global warming.
- Seek business opportunities with environmentally sound companies, like those that belong to an area [Sustainable Business Forum](#) or participate in a [DEQ P2 partnership](#) .
- Reuse cups for coffee and other beverages.
- Join a [Michigan DEQ pollution prevention partnership](#).
- Exercise on the job by using the stairs for short trips, instead of the elevator. Giving the elevator a rest saves energy and is healthier!
- Save on energy costs at the office by turning off computer monitors and printers...if possible, the entire system at night. Energy efficiency pays!
- Working late? Use only the lights you need. Lighting the entire floor wastes energy. Using less energy means fewer emissions which lead to global warming.
- Save time and travel costs by using a conference call for meetings. Less travel leads to fewer car or plane emissions, and less pollution.
- When scheduling your next meeting, let people know of others attending from their building or part of town. Ride sharing saves money and pollution
- When holding meetings, make them [Green meetings](#)

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Paper, Copier, Printer Tips for the Office

- Use a copier that prints on both sides of the paper to reduce paper use, reduce file space and reduce postage costs.
- Use the backs of letters, and one-sided copies for draft copies, rough notes, scratch pads, or scrap paper. Use old (non-confidential) papers for packing material.
- Recycle toner cartridges.
- Write on both sides of the page when using note-pads.
- Keep memos and letters to one page.
- Single-space text in your final reports.
- Reuse old file-folders.
- Reuse old cardboard boxes for loose files, magazines or other materials, or as scrap-paper trays.
- Set up a central filing system instead of maintaining duplicate personal files.
- Use reusable envelopes for regular interoffice correspondence.
- Use envelopes without plastic windows. The cellophane contaminates and lowers the grade of paper for recycling.
- Circulate or post memos rather than copying individual memos for everyone. Set up company or departmental bulletin boards in visible locations or shared drives.
- Circulate one copy of reports, newspapers and magazines instead of duplicating or purchasing multiple copies.

- Print fewer copies of reports for meetings and make them available only on request. This reduces your mailing and printing costs.
- Ensure distribution lists are current to avoid unnecessary copies. Request the removal of your company's name from mailing lists to avoid unsolicited mail. Call the company sending the mail or write to Direct Marketing Association (US) Mail Preference Service, 6 E. 43rd Street, New York, NY, 10017.)
- Make sure staff is trained in the proper use of the copier and printer so paper is not wasted through misuse and reduce unnecessary maintenance.
- Make double-sided copies. If your copier doesn't have this feature, do double-sided photocopying manually and ensure your next copier has this feature.
- Use the reduction feature on your copier or computer to fit more information on a page.
- Make all revisions on screen before printing hard copy. Wherever possible, circulate disks or copies by email for review instead of drafts on paper.
- Store documents on computer disks or micro-fiche, and minimize the number of hard copies made. This reduces paper used and saves storage space.
- Use computer fax software that doesn't require paper to send facsimiles. If paper is used, use regular office paper rather than thermal fax paper which is not recyclable.
- Use e-mail when possible.
- Recycle all office paper. Choose recognizable and uniform collection containers for your recycling program. Each employee should have his/her own container to collect recyclable paper to then empty at central locations.
- Buy 100 % recycled (tree-free), non-bleached toilet paper and facial tissue.
- Purchase products with post-consumer recycled content, such as office paper, envelopes, refined motor oil, retreaded tires, etc. Implement a company-wide purchasing policy that gives preference to materials with post-consumer recycled content.
- Use your internal distribution network to transport recyclable materials from throughout your company to one central location, to increase the volume and value of your recyclable commodities.
- Pool your recyclables with neighboring businesses to increase volume and recycling potential.
- Give old magazines to hospitals, clinics or nursing homes. Turn over old trade magazines and journals to libraries and schools.
- Donate out-of-date stationery to local schools or charitable or environmental groups.

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Waste Prevention Tips for Workplace Operations

- Eliminate throw-away pens and pencils. Replace them with refillable ones.
- Use permanent instead of disposable tape dispensers.
- Purchase reconditioned equipment and supplies such as printer and copier cartridges, or building materials from a re-store, etc.
- Invest in durable (rather than disposable) goods and equipment which are easy to repair. The initial cost difference is usually justified by lower maintenance, disposal, and replacement costs.
- Ensure staff are properly trained to operate equipment so materials aren't wasted.
- Institute a preventive maintenance program. Service equipment regularly to ensure efficiency and minimize potential waste.
- Repair damaged or worn equipment instead of disposing of it.
- Redirect surplus goods or off-specification goods from the waste stream.
- Donate items no longer useful to your company (such as furniture or electronic equipment) to a charity or school.

- Purchase reusable hearing protection.
- Use reclaimed building products (such as doors and windows) when renovating or constructing new facilities.
- Buy supplies in bulk whenever possible. Bulk purchases in reusable containers can be particularly cost-effective. Network with neighbors to facilitate bulk purchasing.
- Where volumes permit, install material-handling equipment such as balers, shredders or compactors, to improve efficiency of handling recyclables.
- Avoid non-recyclable products like aerosol containers and non-rechargeable batteries.
- Purchase chemicals in the smallest practical quantity to reduce spills and spoilage. Buying some chemicals in bulk may not be cost-effective if they may have a limited shelf life and become a waste.
- Purchase non-toxic chemicals for cleaning. Wherever possible, switch to less-hazardous alternatives such as water-based rather than oil-based paint.
- Encourage the use of multi-purpose chemicals - cleaners, solvents, paints, etc. - to reduce inventory.
- Reuse cleaners and solvents. Quality is often not compromised and costs are significantly reduced.
- In high-usage processes, implement bulk systems to reduce chemical handling, risks of spills and losses through evaporation.
- Recycle used oil and fluids from your operations.
- Purchase recycled oils and fluids.
- Have damaged skids repaired.
- Recycle wood waste, scrap metal, and other recyclable building or manufacturing materials.
- Explore exchange programs. Other companies may be interested in your wooden skids, metal barrels, chemical or other waste.
- Purchase products that are durable and easy to repair.

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Packaging Waste Prevention Tips

- Reduce packaging used to ship or receive goods and supplies (e.g., pens, chairs, etc). Where packaging is required, use a minimum of plastic film, fabric or shrink wrap, or use reusable packing pallets and containers.
- If packages cannot be reused or recycled, design them to be easily compacted by consumers or waste management companies. This helps minimize collection frequency and landfill space.
- Package products in concentrated units to decrease the package/product ratio.
- Incorporate recycled and recyclable materials in your packaging. Design packaging from uniform materials for ease of recycling.
- Investigate local markets for your recyclable materials.
- Reuse or recycle used shipping drums and/or containers. Replace cardboard boxes with durable, multi-use boxes for shipping and receiving.
- Reuse packing materials such as polystyrene "popcorn chips" or shredded newspaper. If this isn't feasible, give the packing material back to the supplier or to another business that can use it such as local private mailing centers such as Mail Boxes Etc. Call the Plastic Loosefill Products Council (1-800-828-2214) for the names of local businesses that reuse them.
- Identify materials on packages (e.g., plastic identification code on beverage containers) to aid in separation and recycling.
- Offer discounts to customers who bring in their own bags for carrying purchases. Ensure your company offers/sells reusable bags - such as cloth bags - for carrying purchases.

- Consider accepting packing material or empty containers back from customers for reuse.
- Ask suppliers to provide reusable shipping containers that have a means of return.

Transportation

- Car pool or take public transportation to work.
- Organize a carpool at your work.
- Reduce commuting. Choose to live close to your work.
- Shift work schedules to allow employees to avoid morning rush-hour traffic.
- Allow employees to work at home (telecommuting).
- Offer bus passes.
- For employees who rideshare or use public transportation, provide a guaranteed emergency ride home.
- Carpool to lunch and meetings.
- Schedule meetings that don't require driving (meet on site or make conference calls).
- Postpone fueling fleet vehicles until after 6 p.m.
- Offer free drinks at your cafeteria to encourage employees to eat at work.
- Use bio-diesel in diesel vehicles to improve mileage, and reduce emissions.
- Use bio based or alternate fuels to support farming and reduce dependence on foreign oil.
- See On the Road P2 tips also

Miscellaneous

- Offer any excess untreated or unpainted wood to employees or the public for reuse.
- Delay working with volatile solvents, gas, mowers, bulldozers, backhoes, tractors, and other engine activities till cooler day hours to reduce emissions and ozone impacts.
- Delay painting, degreasing, tank cleaning, ground maintenance, and road repair from the heat of the day to cooler hours to reduce emissions.
- Switch loads to fired heaters or boilers with low nitrogen oxide burners.
- Turn lights off inside vending machines.
- Use non-toxic cleaners.
- Set up an internal exchange list for surplus materials available that others in the company or office can use. This reduces waste and purchasing costs.

Links:

- [Recycling & Exchange information](#) - DEQ
- [Consider "Greener" Cleaners](#)
- [Cutting Paper](#)
- [Choose Green Office Products](#)
- [Indoor Air Quality \(IAQ\)](#)
- [Source Reduction Now](#)
- [Environmentally Preferred Purchasing](#)
- [Green Building & Restores](#) - DEQ

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