

Simple Steps for Individuals

Thanks for Choosing Environmental Excellence! Here are some ideas to help you get started improving the environment. **In compiling this list we have incorporated a wide variety of suggestions, knowing that what makes sense for one person may not be practical for another.**

We hope you will consider implementing the steps that seem right for you.



Recycle

- Visit our web site at www.ceegr.org and click on Reduce, Reuse, Recycle for information on what and where you can recycle in the St. Louis region.
- Make recycling part of your daily routine. Paper, newspaper, magazines, corrugated cardboard, aluminum and steel 'tin' cans, scrap metal, glass containers, #1 and #2 plastic containers, plastic grocery bags, clothes hangers, rechargeable batteries, eye glasses, computer equipment and much more can be recycled.

Reduce

- Remove your name from "junk" mail lists. Visit www.newdream.org/junkmail/ or write to: Mail Preference Service, Direct Marketing Association, PO Box 643, Carmel, NY 10512.

Reuse

- Use cloth napkins at the table and sponges or rags for clean-up.
- Minimize the use of disposable plates, cups, and eating utensils.
- Reuse paper or plastic bags to line your trash can instead of buying plastic liners.
- Rinse and reuse plastic sandwich and storage bags.
- Purchase a reusable coffee filter rather than disposable paper filters.
- Buy used clothing, furniture, books, equipment, etc. from secondhand shops, consignment shops, antique stores, classified ads, or garage sales. Donate your used goods to charities or resale shops instead of discarding.
- Rent or borrow equipment that is used only occasionally.
- Use razors with replaceable blades or an electric razor rather than disposable razors.
- Use rechargeable batteries.
- Use reusable containers or wax paper to store food rather than plastic wrap or disposable plastic bags.
- Reuse foam peanuts and bubble wrap, or take to a shipping service. Call the **Peanut Hotline**, 1-(800) 828-2214 for an automated list of local businesses that will gladly accept clean, dry, loose-fill packaging materials.
- Educators can find industrial scrap and other unusual items for craft or science projects at the **Teachers' Recycle Center, Inc.**, (636) 227-7095, or at **Leftovers, Etc.**, (314) 481-8770 or (636) 498-1212.

- Habitat for Humanity's ReStore**, (314) 531-4155, accepts donations and resells building materials and fixtures.
- Donate used holiday and other types of greeting cards to **St. Jude's Ranch for Children**, 100 St. Jude's St., Boulder City, NV 89005-1618.

Buy Recycled—Buy Smart

- Purchase products and look for packages that contain recycled materials. Share your interest in purchasing recycled products with your local retailers.
- Purchase plastic trash bags with post-consumer recycled content.
- Purchase products in plastic bottles with post-consumer recycled content.
- Purchase unbleached paper products (napkins, paper towels, etc.) with post-consumer recycled content.
- Use re-refined motor oil and antifreeze; they meet the same quality standards as virgin oil products.
- Consider retreads instead of new tires; they contain 75% post-consumer product. For information, call the **Tire Industry Association (TIA)** toll free, 1-(800) 426-8835.
- Recycling fact: Aluminum cans, glass containers, and bi-metal cans (commonly called steel or tin cans) all contain a high percentage of post-consumer recycled content.

Shopping Wisely

- Buy in bulk or in refillable containers to reduce packaging waste and save money.
- Buy products that are packaged in containers that are locally recyclable. For example, buy canned soup rather than instant which is often over-packaged in non-recyclable materials.
- Purchase products that are made of renewable resources: wool, cottons, and wood instead of plastics, etc.
- Buy locally grown, seasonal produce to reduce transportation energy usage.
- Take your own shopping bags.
- Avoid purchasing and using products with:
 - Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs): foam insulation, foam packaging, aerosol dust removers, etc.
 - HCFCs: polystyrene (#6 plastics).
 - Methyl chloroform: found in many home products, especially aerosol cans.
- Wise Shopping fact: Organic produce is grown without the use of pesticides.

Saving Energy

Lighting

- Use compact fluorescent bulbs in your light fixtures. Compact fluorescents use 75% less energy than incandescent bulbs and last nine times longer. They will not only reduce your energy bill, but will help reduce air pollution.
- Turn off lights and appliances in areas that are not being used.
- Use natural sunlight for lighting when possible.
- Use solar-powered or energy-efficient fluorescent or sodium outdoor lights.

Kitchen

- Purchase kitchen appliances with the highest energy efficiency rating available.
- Check the seal on your oven door to make sure it is clean, with no cracks or tears that might allow heat to escape.
- Use ceramic or glass baking dishes to cook and bake at lower temperatures.
- Keep stove-top burner reflectors clean to maximize relected heat.
- Use the air-dry and/or short-cycle settings on your dishwasher to reduce energy usage.
- Set your refrigerator temperatures correctly. If it is just 10°F colder than necessary, it will use 25% more energy. The freezer should be set between 0 and 5°F; the refrigerator between 38 and 42°F.
- Keep your refrigerator and freezer as full as possible because solid materials take longer to warm than air.
- Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator. This helps the refrigerator cool with less energy.
- Check that your refrigerator door seals tightly. Use this simple test: close the door on a piece of paper and try to pull the paper out. If it slips out easily, cold air is probably escaping. Adjust or replace the seal.
- Ensure that all liquids stored in the refrigerator are tightly capped to reduce internal humidity. This results in lower energy usage.
- Allow leftovers to cool prior to storing in the refrigerator.

Washer/Dryer

- Purchase the most energy-efficient washer and/or dryer available.
- Purchase a front-loading clothes washer; they use a fraction of the energy and half the water of conventional models and get your clothes just as clean.
- Wash clothes using the “delicate” cycle when possible to reduce energy costs and wear on the washer motor and to help your clothes last longer.
- Hang your wet laundry outside on a clothes line or on an indoor drying rack instead of using the dryer.

- Keep the dryer’s filter and exhaust hose free of lint and other debris.
- Do not over-dry your clothes in the dryer.

Heating/Cooling

- Install a timer on your home’s thermostat.
- Plug the hole in the wall behind your thermostat with a piece of insulation to obtain a more accurate reading.
- Shade your air conditioner and save energy. Direct sunlight will cause it to use up to 5% more energy.
- Avoid overworking your air conditioner and heater. Set your thermostat to the highest temperature that feels comfortable in the summer and the lowest in the winter.
- Minimize heating and cooling unoccupied areas of your home by closing doors and vents.
- Close your blinds and curtains on summer days to keep your home cooler. Open them on sunny winter days.
- Use a whole house fan instead of turning on the air conditioner.
- Install reusable furnace and air conditioner filters and clean them regularly.
- Install storm windows or clear polyethylene plastic on your windows to further insulate your home. If you are installing new windows, consider using double pane windows which provide better insulation.
- Seal leaks and insulate your heating and cooling ducts. This can save up to 10% on your heating and cooling costs.

Water Heater

- Set your water heater thermostat to the lowest setting you need. A good temperature for general usage is 120 degrees.
- Install a timer on your electric water heater.
- Install an insulation blanket on your hot water heater and the pipes leaving the tank.
- Consider installing a heat trap on your hot water heater. This will stop hot water from circulating when not in use.

Miscellaneous

- Use turbine vents or screen vents near gables, roof lines, and under eaves to ventilate the attic of your home, keeping it cooler in the summer.
- Patch foundation cracks and insulate basement walls to minimize heat loss in winter.
- Configure your computer to go into power-saver mode when not in use. Turn it off at night.

Saving Water

- Adjust your washing machine's water level for the size of each load.
- Run your dishwasher only when it is full.
- Use cold water to rinse dishes prior to loading into your dishwasher.
- Turn off the water when brushing your teeth.
- Rinse your razor in a plugged sink, holding a little water, instead of running water.
- Check your toilet for leaks. Use this simple test: place a little food coloring in your toilet tank. If the color appears in the bowl, there is a leak.
- Use a broom instead of a hose to clean driveways and sidewalks.
- Check faucets throughout the home for leaks. A small drip can waste 4-5 gallons of water a day.
- Install a water-displacement device, such as a toilet dam, in your home's toilet tanks to reduce the refill volume after each toilet flush. You can also use a soda bottle or milk jug.
- Install aerators on all faucets to reduce water consumption.
- Install a low-flow shower head.

Maintenance & Cleaning

- Use less toxic, water-based (latex) paints instead of oil-based.
- Use biodegradable soaps and cleaners to minimize water pollution.
- Limit your use of solvents, cleansers and paint, especially on "red" air quality days.
- Inventory your house and garage for hazardous products. Make sure they are stored safely and investigate safe disposal options.
- Use vinegar and water as an everyday glass cleaner to clean windows, mirrors, and car windshields.
- Use old newspapers instead of paper towels to clean windows.

In Your Yard

- Keep your lawn area to a minimum. Fill your yard with hardy, native varieties of shrubs, plants, and flowers, which require less care and provide habitat for birds, insects and other wildlife. For more information on attracting wildlife to your backyard, contact the **Missouri Dept. of Conservation**, (573) 751-4115, or visit the **National Wildlife Federation** web site at www.nwf.org to learn about their Backyard Habitat program.

- Use an electric or push mower for your lawn instead of a gas-powered one to reduce emissions.
- Mow your lawn in the evening when mower emissions will not interact with heat and sunlight to create air pollution. Avoid mowing on "red" or "yellow" air quality days.
- Set your mower blades so that grass is cut about 2-3 inches tall, minimizing loss of moisture from the soil.
- Leave grass clippings on the lawn to provide mulch for your lawn and help reduce water evaporation.
- Water your lawn only when it needs it. Water in the morning to avoid evaporation in the afternoon and disease from evening dampness.
- When you do water, deep soak your lawn to ensure that moisture reaches the roots.
- Install drip irrigation hoses for gardens and shrubs.
- Use captured rainwater to water garden and yard plants.
- Compost your yard waste as well as fruit and vegetable scraps from your kitchen.
- Place a layer of mulch around trees and plants to slow evaporation and to reduce weeds.
- Pull weeds by hand, rather than using herbicides.
- Avoid pesticide and herbicide overuse.
- Use natural insect and weed controls rather than pesticides and herbicides.
- Recycle plastic pots. Ask at your local nursery, or watch for the **Missouri Botanical Garden's** annual plastic pot collection event.

In Your Car

- When buying a vehicle, purchase one that gets the best available gas mileage.
- Carpool or use public transportation, especially on "red" air quality days.
- Combine short trips to use less fuel and spend less time on the road.
- Patronize businesses close to home to save time and fuel.
- Limit your car warm-ups to 30 seconds.
- Avoid waiting in lines at drive-up windows.
- Purchase gasoline with the correct octane content for your vehicle.
- Refuel vehicles in the evening when the gasoline vapors won't mix with heat and sunlight to create air pollution.
- Avoid topping off your tank to reduce the escape of gasoline vapors into the air.

- Replace the gas tank cap tightly to prevent the escape of vapors from the gasoline tank, which causes air pollution.
- Replace missing or cracked gas caps with the model designed for your car.
- Repair leaks in your vehicle's radiator, air conditioner, or other systems.
- If you change your oil yourself, recycle it at a motor oil collection center. The oil you recycle is re-refined and re-sold.
- Keep your car tuned-up to maximize fuel efficiency.
- Place a sun shade under your car's windshield to reduce the need for air conditioning.
- Check tire pressure frequently to improve your gas mileage. Under-inflated tires cause "rolling resistance" and decrease fuel efficiency by up to 5%.
- Use radial tires to increase fuel efficiency.
- Dispose of antifreeze, oil, brake fluid, and other fluids safely. Don't pour these substances down drains, into sewers, or into creeks or streams.

At Your Leisure

- Turn off the water heater and the heat or air conditioner when leaving on vacation.
- When staying in hotels for extended visits, set up a schedule with the hotel to wash sheets and towels less frequently.
- Use a charcoal chimney, instead of lighter fluid, to light your coals.
- Recycle your fishing line. Check with your local tackle store for a drop-off bin or send your fishing line to:
Berkley Recycling Center, P.O. Box 456, Spirit Lake, Iowa 51360.

At Work

- Start an environmental program at your place of business. In the St. Louis area, visit the *Choose Environmental Excellence - Gateway Region* web site at www.ceegr.org or call us at (314) 962-4100 or email info@ceegr.org for help in getting started.
- Explore carpooling, public transportation, and working at home to save energy, money, and time. For information on public transportation and carpooling options, visit the **Citizens for Modern Transit** website at www.cmt-stl.org or contact them at (314) 231-7272, email www@cmt-stl.org.
- Use both sides of paper. Even if your copier doesn't have a duplex setting, you can often manually copy to the other side.

- Use scrap paper for printing draft copies.
- Use the stairs instead of an elevator.
- Use durable cups and coffee mugs instead of disposable.
- Visit the library or exchange or share books, magazines and periodicals instead of purchasing them.
- For ideas on how your employer can *Choose Environmental Excellence*, contact us at (314) 962-4100 or info@ceegr.org and ask for our free brochure, *Simple Steps for Businesses*. This information can also be found on our web site, www.ceegr.org.

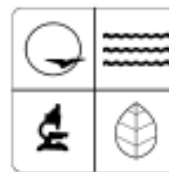
Spreading the Word

- Encourage your friends and family to help the environment.
- Join or contribute to an environmental organization.
- Encourage elected officials to consider the environmental consequences of their decisions.
- Encourage businesses you patronize to practice environmental responsibility.
- Nominate yourself or someone you know for an Environmental Excellence Award. These awards are presented annually by Choose Environmental Excellence - Gateway Region to individuals, schools, businesses, and organizations throughout the metropolitan area that have taken exemplary steps toward becoming more environmentally responsible. For more information, visit our web site at www.ceegr.org or call us at (314) 962-4100 or email info@ceegr.org.

We continually update these *Simple Steps*. For new ideas, please subscribe to our free newsletter, contact us at info@ceegr.org or (314) 962-4100 or visit our website: www.ceegr.org

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Support for the production of this information was provided by the St. Louis-Jefferson Solid Waste Management District, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.



Missouri Department
of Natural Resources



Printed on Recycled Paper.
Revised 4/20/04.