

Sustainable Living Guide

It is all our responsibility to reduce our environmental impact through continuous improvement of our standards, policies, and operating practices. This guide shares easy ways you can save energy, conserve water, and limit waste to help improve our environment.

Energy Efficiency

Decreasing your energy use reduces greenhouse gas emissions and can save you money without impacting your comfort.



HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING

- » Use **fresh air** to warm and cool spaces naturally.
- » Keep windows closed when the heat or air conditioner is running.
- » Make sure furniture is not blocking any vents.
- » Control daylight, heat gain, and air flow with blinds and/or curtains:
 - » In the winter, downward slanting blinds permit sunlight to enter the room and increase warmth.
 - » In the summer, close the blinds as tightly as possible. This will reflect light and heat and create a pocket of air that will serve as an insulator.
- » In the winter, switch the **ceiling fans** to spin in reverse to circulate warm air downward.
- » Place a **draft stopper** under exterior doors.
- » Layer clothing in the winter. The United States Department of Energy calculates that **your energy bill increases 3% for each degree you raise the thermostat.**
- » If you have a programmable thermostat, keep temperature settings at minimum:

	When You Are Home	When You Are Out
Winter	68°F/20°C	55°F/13°C
Summer	75°F/24°C	82°F/28°C

THE KITCHEN

- » Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator and cover pots and pans while cooking to reduce cooking time.
- » Minimize the number of times the oven door is opened during baking. Each opening can reduce the oven’s temperature by 25°F/-4°C.
- » When possible, use **smaller appliances** to cook.
- » To ensure food safety, **keep the refrigerator temperature set between 36°F/2°C to 40°F/4°C and the freezer at 0°F/-17°C.**
- » Turn off the **drying function** of the dishwasher. Leave the door open to air-dry dishes instead.

ELECTRONICS

- » Use **power strips** and install **outlet timers** to conserve energy. Don’t forget to turn them off/on when needed.
- » Shut down your computer if you don’t expect to use it for two hours or more. Turn off the monitor if the computer is not going to be used for 20 minutes or more.
- » Select **ENERGY STAR®-certified** (or equivalent local efficient certification standard) products that conserve energy.
- » **Mitigate e-waste** by properly recycling cell phones, household batteries, and light bulbs.

LIGHTING

- » Turn off lights in unoccupied rooms.
- » Take advantage of **natural daylight.**
- » When working or reading, use task lighting, such as desk lamps, rather than lighting the entire room.
- » Dust lamps and light fixtures to remove layers of dust, which obstruct light emission.
- » Use **ENERGY STAR®** (or equivalent local efficient certification standard) LED lights.

Water Conservation

Always check for leaks and dripping faucets and report immediately to property management. Even the smallest leak can lead to huge waste of water or a potential emergency.

THE KITCHEN

- » Use the kitchen sink sprayer to rinse your dishes and **avoid leaving the water running continuously**.
- » Load the dishwasher to capacity. A full load will save water, energy, and detergent.
- » Select the **short cycle option** or energy saving mode on your dishwasher, if available.
- » Keep drinking water in the refrigerator instead of letting the tap run while you wait for the water to cool.
- » Use pitchers or basins to **collect water** that runs while you adjust the water temperature. You can use this as drinking water or reuse the water to rinse dishes, fill pet bowls, or water your plants.
- » Wash your fruits and vegetables in a pan of water instead of washing them with water running continuously from the tap.
- » Soak pots and pans instead of letting the water run while you scrape them clean.
- » If you accidentally drop ice cubes when filling your glass from the freezer, don't throw them in the sink. Drop them in a house plant instead.



THE BATHROOM

- » Report any **malfunctioning toilets, leaks, or dripping faucets** to property management.
- » Take **shorter showers**.
- » Turn off running water when washing your face or brushing your teeth.
- » When running a bath, plug the tub before turning on the water; then adjust the temperature as the tub fills.

LAUNDRY & CLEANING

- » Always adjust your washer's load setting to match your laundry load size.
- » Use **cold water** to wash clothes.
- » Choose biodegradable and non-toxic detergents.
- » Use an **eco-friendly dry cleaner** that does not use perchloroethylene ("perc"), a chemical that can be harmful to humans.

IRRIGATION

- » Please report any **irrigation breaks, broken sprinkler heads, suspected leaks**, or any areas where you notice the irrigation system may not be watering on a regular schedule to the management office.

Reduce & Reuse

Source reduction is the best way to conserve resources and reduce pollution. You can't throw away what isn't there! Challenge yourself to find ways to either go without or reuse.



PAPER

- » Purchase paper made from **post-consumer recycled** content.
- » Stop junk mail and unsubscribe from catalogues you don't read.
- » Utilize email and pay bills online.
- » Use **electronic notes** and to-do lists on smartphones.
- » Avoid buying wrapping paper – reuse gift bags, magazines, or newspaper.
- » Buy in bulk to reduce packaging.
- » Only **print when necessary**.
- » Print double-sided, always review a document in Print Preview to check for mistakes, and use small, lighter-weight fonts to save ink (E.g., Century Gothic, Courier, or Garamond).
- » If printing a webpage, copy and paste the link into printwhatyoulike.com to optimize.

FIX FIRST

- » Favorite pair of jeans ripped? **Take them to a tailor for repair** for likely less than the price of a new pair.
- » Take worn or damaged shoes and leather goods to a cobbler.
- » Use **electrical tape** or Sugru® to mend headphones and laptop chargers with exposed wires.
- » Drop your phone in water? Quickly and carefully power off the phone, remove the battery and SIM card (if possible) and dry the phone as best you can with a towel. Then, place all parts in a bowl of uncooked rice (wrapping the phone loosely in a paper towel first), or in a Ziploc® bag with desiccant packets, and leave for 24 to 72 hours to absorb any remaining moisture.

REUSE

- » Keep **reusable shopping and produce bags** in your car so you will have them on hand when you shop.
- » Avoid buying water in disposable plastic bottles; instead, use reusable **BPA-free water bottles**.
- » Use reusable or **paper straws** instead of plastic.
- » Insulated cups and **reusable mugs** keep liquids hot longer and reduce the amount of non-biodegradable Styrofoam from entering the landfill.
- » Use **reusable coffee filters**. Some are made from renewable resources such as hemp or organic cotton.
- » Pack your lunch in a **reusable lunchbox** and use **reusable sandwich bags**.
- » Use **cloth napkins** instead of paper napkins.
- » Most batteries end up in landfills despite being hazardous waste. **Rechargeable batteries** will save you money and help prevent toxic waste from entering landfills.

Recycling

Recycling allows individuals to decrease the negative impact of the waste they produce by conserving natural resources, saving landfill space and reducing water and air pollution.



ELECTRONIC "E"-WASTE

- » Used cell phones and accessories can be recycled at most major phone retailers or through non-profit organizations.
- » Most large national electronics stores offer **recycling drop off** for TVs, cell phones, cameras, computers, and appliances.
- » Send old iPods, iPhones, mobile phones, Macs, or PCs to Apple for free where they will recycle them for you and give you an **Apple gift card** if the item has monetary value. See apple.com/recycling.
- » Handle **CFLs** safely and dispose of them responsibly. CFLs contain a small amount of mercury and recycling these bulbs prevents the release of mercury into the environment. Check with your local home improvement store about disposal.
- » Bring old batteries to your local office or electronics store for proper recycling.
- » Most major auto parts stores accept **used car batteries** for recycling.
- » Most major office supply stores offer **rebate programs** on used ink and toner cartridges.

GREASE

- » Do not pour your used cooking oil down the sink. This practice can back up your sink and cause problems throughout the sanitary sewer system.
- » More and more cities are offering **recycling drop-off points** for used cooking oils. Check with your municipality.
- » If you must throw grease away, allow the oil to completely cool and place it in a sealable container, such as a peanut butter jar, and place in the trash.

RECYCLING EVERYTHING ELSE

- » Check with your property manager for guidance on recycling of **plastic, paper, aluminum, and glass**.
- » Return the **hangers** and **plastic bags** to your dry cleaner on the next visit.
- » Reuse Styrofoam packing peanuts or take them to a UPS store.
- » Join local **Facebook Marketplace** or local **Freecycle** groups. Check out: freecycle.org.

Shopping

Buying sustainable and local products has positive impacts on your health, the environment, the local economy, and your wallet.

GENERAL

- » Shop local, support small businesses, and buy **second hand** when possible.
 - » Choose items made from rapidly renewable resources such as **cotton, wool, hemp, soy, bamboo, and cork**.
 - » Avoid excess packaging by choosing larger sizes/quantities instead of smaller, individually packaged items.
 - » Buy products in **reusable containers**.
 - » Purchase products that can eventually be recycled.
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FOOD

- » Visit your local farmer's market to buy **local, in-season produce** to support your community and limit the distance that produce travels.
- » Buy organic fruit and vegetables if possible.
- » Look for Fair Trade-certified items.
- » Local, organic, free-range eggs are generally higher in vitamins and minerals than mass-produced eggs.
- » Choose dairy products with no artificial hormones or antibiotics.
- » Avoid buying plastic-coated boxed foods like juice boxes, boxed broths or soups, and juice pouches as they cannot be recycled.

Transportation

Making better choices about how you get from place to place reduces dependency on fossil fuels and decreases your impact on the environment.

WALK OR USE ALTERNATIVE TRANSIT

- » Bicycling is a **completely clean** form of transportation.
 - » Use your smart phone to find nearby **walkable** shops, restaurants, services, and activities.
 - » Discover your area's **public transit** by checking online public transit trip planners.
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YOUR CAR

- » Purchase **fuel-efficient** cars such as cars with a minimum score of 45 in the ACEEE annual vehicle rating guide (greenercars.org).
- » Use **cruise control** on the highway to maintain consistent speed and save gas.
- » Turn off your engine when your vehicle is parked to avoid excessive idling.
- » Keep your tires properly inflated for optimum gas mileage.
- » Consider **carpooling** or **ridesharing**.



Cleaning

Cleaning sustainably by using products you already own like baking soda and vinegar helps keep toxins out of the air, water, and soil, and saves you money.

VINEGAR USES

- » Choose **white vinegar**, as brown vinegar will typically stain porous surfaces.
- » Lightly spritz your home with vinegar to freshen the air (the smell will quickly vanish).
- » Use to clean out deposits clogging a steam iron or coffeemaker.
- » Add ¼ cup/60ml to the washer to remove mildew smells from towels and sheets.
- » Run 1 cup/250 ml through a cycle (without clothes) to clean your washing machine.
- » Freeze in an ice cube tray and run a few in the garbage disposal with water to deodorize.
- » Clean the microwave by heating ½ cup/120ml vinegar and ½ cup/120ml water in a microwave-safe bowl and wipe.

BAKING SODA USES

- » A box or bowl of baking soda in the refrigerator, freezer, or cabinet absorbs odors.
- » Sprinkle baking soda in the bottom of an empty kitchen **trash bag** before you fill it.
- » Sprinkle baking soda over **grease splatters** in the kitchen to clean without smearing.
- » A paste of baking soda and water will make **stainless steel** appliances shine.
- » Sprinkle baking soda into a toilet bowl or sink; allow to sit for 10-15 minutes and then scrub.
- » To create a **tub-scum cleaner**, mix baking soda and liquid soap to a thick consistency.
- » To remove scuff marks from the floor, sprinkle with baking soda and wipe with a damp cloth.
- » To remove **carpet odor**, sprinkle with baking soda, let stand for 15 minutes, then vacuum.

Health

Health and wellbeing is not separate from the health of our surrounding environment, but rather interconnected. It is critical that we take care of ourselves while also taking care of our planet.



WELL-BEING

- » Use vacuums and air purifiers with **HEPA filters**.
- » Get **houseplants** to freshen and remove toxins from the air.
- » Go **smoke-free**. If you are a smoker, consider quitting, not smoking in your apartment, and supporting any smoke-free policies at your community.
- » Choose **petroleum-free** cosmetic products that do not contain mineral oil, paraffin, or propylene glycol. See **Environmental Working Group's Skin Deep®** database for toxicity ratings of common cosmetic products (ewg.org/skindeep).
- » Look for certified organic personal-care products such as those with **USDA Organic**, **ECOCERT®**, or other local certified organic labels.
- » Use aluminum-free deodorants.