

Energy Efficiency Fact Sheet: Office Environment

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Introduction

Saving energy in the office is not just for the big end of business. For many small businesses, being connected via technology is pivotal to business success. The energy use from office equipment in a typical small business may account for approximately 18 percent of its overall energy bill⁵ and as a result can significantly contribute to the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions emitted by a business.

If you would you like to try decreasing your energy bills and spend the money on growing your business, start by making simple changes to the way you use your office equipment and invest in energy efficient equipment that can lower your overall costs over the longer term.

Energy Saving Tips

Quick wins

- **Turn off your monitor.** If your computer monitor does not have an automatic 'power down' feature operational, we suggest you turn off your monitor if you are going to be away for more than 30 minutes. A desktop computer used for eight hours a day can generate over 600 kilograms of greenhouse gases each year.²
- **Check your office equipment is off.** Encourage employees to turn off all office equipment after hours and on weekends. Ensure all office equipment is off and not just in sleep mode.
- **Switch off at the power point.** Turn off your computer and other office equipment at the power point. This will reduce the equipment power usage to zero. Between 40 and 89 percent of the total energy use from computer equipment can be contributed to standby power for some machines.⁸
- **Install timers.** By installing timers, equipment will automatically switch off at designated times. Be sure to inform employees of how they can override the timer for times when they may need to stay back.
- **Think before you print.** Keep in mind that inkjet printers use up to 90 percent less energy than laser printers. Colour printing can also use more energy than black and white.² Remember to use double sided printing if your printer has this capability to save paper.

- **Photocopy in batches.** Run all your print jobs at once as each time you start the photocopier it uses more energy. Energy use while photocopying varies from a few hundred Watts to several kiloWatts, generating from 0.25 to more than 3 kilograms of greenhouse gas and furthermore costing between 4 to 45 cents per hour of continuous copy.¹

Long Term

- **Select an energy efficient computer.** Consider purchasing laptops, as a laptop uses up to 90 percent less energy than a standard desktop computer.²
- **Consider Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) screens.** Explore the option of purchasing an LCD flat screen as they use roughly half the amount of electricity as a CRT monitor.



- **Opt for a small monitor.** Why not consider purchasing a laptop or a computer with a small monitor? The average computer uses approximately 120W per hour with the monitor consuming up to 50 percent of that total.⁵
- **Sell unnecessary office equipment.** Only use office equipment you need. Link all computers to just one printer and direct all faxes to just one fax machine. Even better, investigate purchasing a combination fax/printer.
- **Be an energy saving star.** Ensure all purchased office equipment is Energy Star compliant, an international standard for energy efficient electronic equipment. Energy Star compliance reduces the amount of energy used by a product by either automatically switching it into 'sleep' mode when it is not being used and/or reducing the amount of power used when in 'standby' mode.

Possible savings of purchasing energy efficient equipment can be estimated on the online calculator at the Energy Star website: www.energystar.gov.au.

- **Train your employees.** It is all well and good having the most recent energy efficient equipment, but be sure to train employees on how to operate the equipment and maximise all efficiencies. Employee morale might heighten, as they feel they're doing their bit for the environment.
- **Reduce your carbon footprint with green energy.** Government accredited GreenPower can benefit everyone and is one of the simplest things your business can do to reduce its impact on our environment. We give you the choice of accredited new renewable energy from environmentally friendly sources such as solar and wind energy. For more information about Origin GreenPower, visit www.originenergy.com.au/GreenBusiness.

Benefits

Using office equipment efficiently, as well as investing in energy efficient equipment can deliver your business many cost benefits, increased productivity and environmental benefits.

Cost Benefits

The above mentioned actions can result in significant cost benefits in terms of reduced or avoided:

- energy consumption;
- maintenance costs or repairs to old equipment such as desktop computers;
- replacement costs due to reduced operating life of office equipment; and
- running costs.

Environmental Benefits

The associated environmental benefits may include:

- resource conservation from avoided maintenance and repairs; and
- avoided emissions, including greenhouse gases, through energy conservation

Did you know?

1. Using a desktop computer for around eight hours a day, generates over 600 kilograms of greenhouse gases each year.⁴
2. Screen savers waste energy. In fact, computers can use twice the energy to light up the screen as they use for processing.¹
3. Photocopiers and printers can be left inactive 95 percent of the time.⁵

Useful references

- 1. Australian Government - Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts – Green Office Guide**
www.environment.gov.au/settlements/publications/government/purchasing/green-office-guide/pubs/green-office-guide.pdf
- 2. Australian Government – Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts – Greenhouse challenge Plus**
www.environment.gov.au/settlements/challenge/publications/factsheets/pubs/fs-office-equipment.pdf
- 3. Energy Efficiency & Conservation Authority, New Zealand**
www.eeca.govt.nz
- 4. NSW Government – Department of Energy, Utilities and Sustainability - Work Energy Smart**
www.energysmart.com.au/wes/DisplayPage.asp?PageID=34
- 5. Queensland Government - Environmental Protection Agency – Eco-efficiency for Small Business**
www.epa.qld.gov.au/publications/p02283aa.pdf/Ecoefficiency_for_small_business_Office.pdf
- 6. Sustainability Victoria**
www.sustainability.vic.gov.au
- 7. US Department of Energy**
www.doe.gov/energyefficiency/index.htm
- 8. Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Australia's National Greenhouse Accounts – National Inventory by Economic Sector**
www.greenhouse.gov.au/inventory/2006/pubs/inventory2006-economic.pdf

Further information

For more information visit www.originenergy.com.au or phone our dedicated small business team on 1300 730 533.

Endorsement

This fact sheet is endorsed by Ingrid Cornander, MSc Environmental Engineering and Senior Consultant with Impact Employee Communications – An Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide Company. It is for general use only and should be used as a reference guide only.