

Sustainable Practices in the Law Office Annotated Version for Office Personnel

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Oregon Lawyers for a Sustainable Future has created this checklist to assist the law office in (1) assessing its current practices and (2) considering new practices that might be adopted.

GENERAL

- A sustainability policy has been adopted by the firm.
 - *For a model policy, see www.earthleaders.org.*
- Employees have been educated about portions of this policy that relate to their work, and this education is part of new employee training.
 - *New employee orientation checklist includes education about the firm's sustainability value and practices.*
- Discussions have been held with a representative of the building owner regarding the OLSF tool "Best Practices of Office Building Management."
 - *See www.earthleaders.org.*

RECYCLING

Metro-area cities and counties provide technical assistance in designing a business recycling and waste reduction system. In Portland call BlueWorks at 503 823-7037.

- Desk-side recycling boxes are at each workstation.
 - *In Portland, to obtain boxes, contact the Office of Sustainable Development, 503 823-7632.*
- Containers are available for bottles, cans, newspapers, magazines, and cardboard, and a procedure has been established for their recycling.
 - *In the City of Portland, haulers are required to provide recycling for these items if the commercial customer (building owner) requests it. The firm must express its desires to the building manager.*
- A procedure has been established for recycling some items not accepted by the garbage hauler, such as Tyvek envelopes, batteries, and plastic bags.
 - *In the Portland area, Tyvek envelopes can be stored inside a Tyvek envelope and, when it is full, sent or taken to Far West Fibers, 5525 SE 28th Ave, Portland 97242. Batteries should be delivered to a Metro transfer station. Call Metro at 503 234-3000 for the nearest plastic bag depot.*

PAPER REDUCTION

In the Portland region about 50 percent of law office waste is paper while for other businesses it's about 20 percent. The average lawyer processes about 65,000 sheets of paper annually.

- Office policy states that all copy and print jobs should be double sided unless otherwise specified.
 - *Internal and external copying services have been directed to automatically copy double sided.*

- ❑ Copiers and printers have an automatic duplex option.
 - *Printers must be purchased that have duplexing capability. Then users must be trained how to use this option.*
- ❑ Office policy on data and document storage is intended to minimize the use of paper.
 - *Firms purchase software, such as Interwoven Worksite (formerly iManage) or MDY FileSurf, that allow document storage electronically. To achieve full participation, training is essential.*
- ❑ Office policy on court and agency filing procedures favor using the least paper that courts allow.
 - *Filing is done electronically whenever possible.*
 - *In Oregon, a law prohibits courts from declining double-sided paper filings.*
- ❑ Employees are educated to save paper printed on one side, and to use it for printing drafts, making note pads, or other purposes.
 - *Next to central printers are boxes for paper used on one side only. Personnel can gather this paper to use in their desk top printers. Someone in the office makes note pads for any personnel who would like them.*
- ❑ Faxes are received and routed electronically.
- ❑ Documents are processed electronically, using scan option on copier when appropriate, rather than printing hard copies.
- ❑ Letter-sized paper, files, and pouches have replaced legal-sized items.
- ❑ Procedures are in place for keeping mailing lists up-to-date so as not to waste paper.
 - *One person might be responsible for keeping a central data base to prevent duplication. Periodically, lawyers will send updated client lists and addresses to the central data base.*
- ❑ Office policy encourages sharing of phone and reference books (e.g., dictionaries, statutes) or use of online sources.
 - *Hard copies of phone directories are not automatically sent to each person but must be requested.*
- ❑ Firm is undertaking the ABA Climate-Challenge "best practices" for paper management.
 - *For an explanation, see www.abanet.org/enviro/climatechallenge/home.shtml.*

PURCHASING SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS

- ❑ Copy/printer paper and file folders have a minimum of 30% post-consumer recycled content.
 - *"Post-consumer" means that the material has been used by a customer and returned to the manufacturer for recycling.*
- ❑ Office policy gives preference for products with recycled content whenever available at a cost of up to 15% more than the same item without recycled content.
 - *The purchasing person automatically purchases recycled content products under the price preference without approval of management.*
- ❑ Letterhead, envelopes, and legal pads have 100% post-consumer recycled content.
- ❑ Paper towels have 100% post-consumer recycled content.
- ❑ Office policy gives preference for Energy Star office equipment.
 - *The Energy Star label assures that the equipment meets EPA energy-efficient standards.*
- ❑ Coffee is organic and shade grown.
 - *These certifications assure that pesticides have not been used and that forests are not cut down for coffee plantations.*

- ❑ Coffee, sugar, creamer, salt, and pepper are purchased in bulk rather than in single-serving containers.
 - *The first three items are requested from your local office coffee vendor.*
- ❑ Suppliers have been notified about firm's purchasing policy.

PREFERRING SUSTAINABLE SERVICE PROVIDERS

- ❑ Soy-based ink is specified for outsourced print jobs.
 - *Soy-based inks emit fewer air pollutants than petroleum-based inks.*
- ❑ Office policy encourages the use of lunch caterers that minimize disposables and purchase locally grown, organic food.
 - *For Lunch Vendor Guidelines, see www.earthleaders.org.*
- ❑ Office policy encourages personnel traveling on business to rent fuel-efficient cars.
- ❑ Office policy encourages hiring event planners who have expertise in sustainable events.
 - *In Portland, for a recommendation, call the Green Industry Council at 503 731-8971.*

ELIMINATING DISPOSABLES

- ❑ Durable plates, cups, glasses, and utensils are provided in kitchen and conference rooms.
 - *Washing durables rather than using disposables saves resources and energy.*
- ❑ Pitchers with tap water, rather than bottled water, are provided in conference rooms. Chilled tap water is available in the kitchens.
 - *A single-serve bottle for water is wasteful packaging. Already-chilled water prevents a person from running the water until it gets cold.*

REUSING EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

- ❑ An internal reuse center has been established for supplies such as binders, file folders, etc.
- ❑ Remanufactured cartridges for laser printers are purchased, and old cartridges are sent out for reuse.
 - *In the Portland area, see Metro's Buyers Guide to Recycled Products online.*
- ❑ Old office equipment, furniture, and supplies are sold or donated for reuse.
 - *Portland area firms often have the vendor take old equipment when it is replaced, donate it to schools or non-profits, or give it to one of the local recyclers (call Metro at 503 234-3000). Furniture can be donated to St. Andrews Legal Clinic or the Oregon Law Center.*

REDUCING TOXIC PRODUCTS

- ❑ Unbleached paper towels and napkins are purchased for at least 50% of firm supply.
 - *Paper bleached with chlorine contributes to dioxin in waterways. "Processed chlorine-free" paper has recycled content that has not been bleached a second time, and any virgin fiber has been bleached with ozone, hydrogen peroxide, oxygen, or enzymes.*
- ❑ Kitchen cleaners of low toxicity and high biodegradability are purchased.
 - *If your vendor does not carry these products, you can purchase them at a natural food store, such as New Seasons, Wild Oats, or Fred Meyer Nutrition Center.*

REDUCING ENERGY

- Office policy calls for individual computers and printers to be turned off at the end of each day.
 - *For research on this issue, see <http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/pubs/factsheets/sw/ComputersMonitors.pdf>*
- Procedures are in place for shared copy machines and printers to be turned off, or put in standby mode, at the end of each day.
- Timers have been installed, or procedures are in place, for turning off lights.
- Office policy encourages reducing (a) the need for business travel, through teleconferencing and other strategies, and (b) carbon emissions of required business travel.
 - *Carbon emissions can be reduced through high-mileage cars. For information about carbon offsets or to purchase them, call The Climate Trust at 503 238-1915.*
- Firm is participating in the ABA Climate-Challenge Energy Star program to reduce energy (or electricity, if a tenant,) by 10 percent.
 - *See www.abanet.org/enviro/climatechallenge/home.shtml.*

PROVIDING COMMUTER INCENTIVES

- A subsidy of at least 50% is provided for bus passes.
 - *In the Portland area, for TriMet bus pass program information, visit <http://trimet.org/employers/index.htm>, then call Kelly Betteridge, 503 962-6474 or Adriana Britton, 503 962-5637*
- Monetary incentives are provided for bike commuters.
 - *A common practice is to pay for an annual bike maintenance service, bike storage lockers, or shower facilities up to the cost of the bus subsidy.*
- Employees are allowed to charge firm for cab fare when working beyond public transportation commute times.
- Firm does not provide free parking for any personnel.
- Firm has purchased one or more car-sharing memberships.
 - *Members of companies, such as Zipcar and CarShare, may use a car for a time and return it to the lot. The availability of this option allows one to leave a personal car at home.*

OTHER

- If firm has a workplace giving program, employees have the option of giving through Earth Share or other program supporting environmental nonprofits.
- Educational speakers on sustainability are invited and promoted as a part of firm training.

*Oregon Lawyers for a Sustainable Future is a project of the Center for Earth Leadership.
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The law office tools are located at www.earthleaders.org/olsf/office_practices.*