



# Go **Green** Opportunities

## Save Money by Recycling and Reusing Office Supplies

### Break the Paper Chain

Every time you go to print, ask yourself if you really need a hard copy. Most of the time the answer will be no. Start by making an effort to edit and proof your documents on the computer, and encourage other employees in your office do the same. When you must print a draft, do so on recycled paper.

Printer and fax paper can often be used more than once. With the exception of formal documents, you can use both sides of a page before disposing of it. Turn leftover paper into scrap paper and use it for incoming faxes, fax cover sheets, informal notes, and phone messages.

### Reuse General Office Items

Items like old binders, file folders, paper clips, pens and pencils, rubber bands, and interoffice mail folders can all be used over and over again. You can even reuse shipping supplies like boxes, packing paper, and Styrofoam pellets. Better yet, shred old paper and use it for packing. Place these reclaimed items in a central location and encourage employees to "shop" at the mini-reuse counter.

You can eliminate disposable items in your break room or lunchroom by asking employees to donate their old dishes, coffee mugs, flatware, and glasses for the office kitchen instead of continually purchasing and using disposable cups and paper plates. Rather than buying individual packets of coffee, creamer, and sugar, purchase these items in bulk and store them in large containers.

### Monitor the Supply Cabinet

It might seem extreme, but limiting access to the supply cabinet can be an effective way to keep a handle on commonly used (and wasted) supplies. Consider giving the key to one person, such as your office manager, and require employees to see this person if they need an item. He or she will be able to better gauge how many supplies are going out the door each week.

Another option is to post a sign on the cabinet encouraging item reuse. If an employee doesn't like a style of pen they've been using, keep a bin of mismatched pens to encourage them to make an exchange rather than throw their old one away.

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## To Succeed, Get Everyone Involved

Hold a companywide meeting to discuss your new office supply waste-reduction program. Explain how maximizing office supplies is in everyone's best interest. Explain that the costs saved help to strengthen the company's bottom line, which can trickle down to the employees in the form of increased job security or even bonuses. You might want to consider throwing occasional office parties or lunches paid for by a percentage of the savings your business is reaping from these cost-cutting measures.

Try to create a company culture not just of cost-consciousness, but also of environmental stewardship. Many people are concerned about the environment but are not sure how to make a difference. Provide them with facts and figures that prove how much their small efforts in the workplace will add up over time.

### Five Easy Things You Can Do to Conserve Office Supplies:

1. Make double-sided copies
2. Replace paper cups and plates in the kitchen with reusable ones
3. Reuse single-sided copies as scratch paper
4. Reuse other supplies such as envelopes and folders
5. Reuse packaging materials



Purchasing used office furniture is an increasingly popular option for companies looking to save money, especially during the startup phase.

<http://www.thegreenworkplace.com/search/label/Green%20Workplace>

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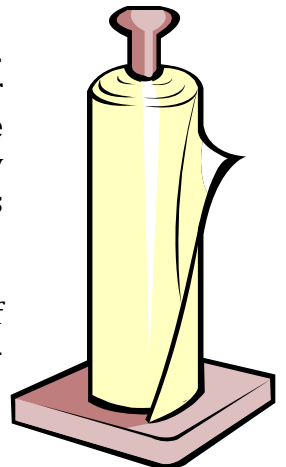
## Green Q&A:

### Why don't we recycle paper towels?

According to MIT's recycling committee Web site, paper can be recycled only so many times. During each generation, the paper fibers become shorter and by the time it becomes a paper towel or piece of tissue paper, the fiber is very short. So, paper towels and tissue paper are not considered to be recyclable. Another reason these items cannot be recycled is they may have organic matter on them - food, germs, mold, etc. - which can contaminate other items to be recycled.

Using items with post-consumer recycled content will keep waste out of landfills... and of course, reducing use in the first place is the primary "R" in the reduce, reuse, recycle mantra.

<http://sustainability.uark.edu/13433.php>



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## Green Tip:

**Fill the dishwasher with every use.** Dishwashers use more energy the less they have in them. By running it with only full loads, you could save an estimated 100 pounds of carbon dioxide and \$40 per year.

[www.myhomeideas.com](http://www.myhomeideas.com)

