

Green Condo/Apartment Checklist

Modification of the "Green Office Checklist," compiled by Sundee Wislow

Focus on the items on this list that work best for your building. Depending on your situation, some of these items will be best addressed by your condo association or building management; others will involve individual residents.

Reducing, Reusing and Recycling

- If you live in a building that has four units or less, educate your neighbors about how to recycle using the city's blue cart program or recycling drop off centers. (The City of Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation picks up waste from buildings that have four units or less and will provide blue carts to all of these residences by 2011. Recycling drop off centers are available to those that do not yet have blue carts. See www.bluecartschicago.org for more information.)
- If you live in a building that is five or more units, work with building management or your condo association to make sure you are served by an effective recycling program. (Buildings of five or more units are serviced by private waste haulers, which are mandated to recycle applicable materials. Your building management is also required to offer you an effective recycling program, which is defined by three things: source reduction and separation, an education program, and a written recycling plan. See www.bluecartschicago.org for more information.)
Here are some ways you can make sure your building is effectively recycling:
 - Ask to see your building's recycling plan.
 - Check to make sure the details in the plan are being carried out (Are recycling bins accessible to all residents? Are recyclables being separated?)
 - Check to see if the private hauler keeps the recyclables separate from trash as they leave your building or if they have a blue bag program in effect.
 - Ask to see the hauler's semi-annual reports to judge how successful your apartment's recycling efforts are.
- Create an area where people can leave materials to be recycled. This can include cell phones, compact discs, bicycles, computers, and anything that is NOT hazardous material. Ask a volunteer to be in charge of disposal. See the **Guide to Recycling Household Hazardous Waste** for information on how to dispose of these items properly. Any materials on the '**List of Common HHW Products and Safety Tips**' should not be collected as part of your project as they could cause harm to you or your participants.
- Compost food waste outdoors or indoors. www.chicagorecycling.org
- Ask residents to cancel junk mail and mailings. <http://reducewaste.org/> (click on "Residential" on left-hand side; scroll down to "Junk Mail Kit")

Transportation

- Create a "carpool board" where people can post notices of opportunities to share rides to work, the grocery store, the airport, etc.
- Provide CTA or Metra information and maps, available at <http://rtachicago.com/>.
- Provide Chicago Bike Maps, available at www.cityofchicago.org/Transportation/bikemap/keymap.html.

Energy Efficiency

- Post an energy saving tip every week above the mailboxes, on a bulletin board, or in an entry area.
- Distribute free compact fluorescent lightbulbs and weatherization kits from the City of Chicago.
- Install an automated thermostat (it's easy to do!) and/or set temperatures so that it will be comfortable during the day, and will use less energy during nights and weekends.
- Schedule an energy audit through your local power company.
- Turn on *power-save* modes on equipment and appliances.
- Turn off equipment during nights and weekends. Attach TV's, radios, computers, microwaves, telephones etc. to power strips for ease in turning them off at night. (Even when not in use, appliances use electricity.)
- For windows that receive direct sunlight, close the blinds to prevent excess heating in the summertime.
- Use a ceiling fan or other fan in the summer time with or without air conditioning. Fans use 98% less energy than A.C. and make you feel up to 6 degrees cooler.
- Open the windows and turn off the air conditioning on nice days.
- Ensure radiators and heaters are not blocked by furniture.

- Turn off lights when exiting rooms.
- If you have to use batteries, buy rechargeable batteries and a charger.
- If purchasing new equipment or appliances, look for EPA Energy Star certified options.

Water Efficiency

- Attach low-flow aerators to sink faucets.
- Install a low-flow showerhead in every bathroom.
- Fix leaky toilets and faucets promptly.
- Check for water leaks at least twice a year.
- Purchase water efficient toilets and dishwashers.
- Research what could be done with gray water and put ideas into practice.

Improved Air Quality

- Conduct an air quality check.
- Buy indoor plants and use natural fertilizers.
- Change air filters regularly.
- Use low VOC paints for walls.
- Turn off air conditioning and open the windows on nice days.
- Establish an effective smoking policy to protect indoor air quality.
- Notify your building manager immediately if you suspect indoor air quality problems.
- Work with building management to ensure only necessary and appropriate pest control practices and non-chemical methods where possible.

Supplies, Products and Furniture

- Use non-toxic, biodegradable cleaning supplies (e.g., Seventh Generation).
<http://www.grist.org/advice/possessions/2003/03/18/possessions-cleaning/index.html>
- Fix or donate broken furniture rather than sending it to a landfill.
- If replacing your carpet, look for non-toxic recyclable carpeting. <http://www.epa.gov/oppt/epp/>
- Purchase products from local suppliers (to avoid long distance shipping and packaging) and from suppliers committed to environmental issues.
- Purchase used items from thrift stores when possible.

Reducing Bird Collisions

(Information provided by the Chicago Ornithological Society, Birds and Buildings Forum, and the National Audubon Society.)

About 8 million birds migrate through Chicago each spring and autumn. Unfortunately, window collisions kill approximately 1 billion birds every year in the US, with millions of collisions happening annually in Chicago. Birds do not see glass, and are attracted by reflections. Especially during migratory season from mid-March to early June and late August to mid-November, building owners and residents can take the following steps to prevent these collisions:

During the day

- Pull down blinds, use external screens, or apply window film to mute reflection.
- Place furniture, banners, or artwork in front of windows to serve as a visual barrier.
- Move green plants away from windows so birds cannot see them as a potential landing spot.

At night, in high-rises

- Turn off lights or close blinds from dusk to daylight.
- Dim or turn off exterior decorative lights, or install motion sensitive lighting.

Green Purchasing:

www.environmentalchoice.com,
<http://www.epa.gov/oppt/epp/>
<http://www.newdream.org/buy/>