# Georgia Tech | Campus Sustainability

# Work Green Resources

## Introduction

Georgia Tech recognizes the environmental challenges we face and is committed to confronting them on campus, in our community, and beyond. The Work Green program is one element of Georgia Tech's sustainability efforts, one that empowers faculty and staff to play an integral role in achieving the Institute's sustainability goals. The resources below will support your leadership in this effort.

## Engagement

Work Green includes components that are behavior-based, with successful implementation dependent upon gaining the buy-in of your colleagues. Here are some tips to help get your colleagues involved.

1. Communicate Work Green best practices to your colleagues through emails, posters, articles, bulletin boards, or newsletters.
2. Provide time in staff meetings to discuss Work Green reminders and updates.
3. Develop a "Green Team" comprised of staff that are committed to participating in the program.
4. Provide recognition to staff members who take on leadership roles in Work Green. Recognition could simply mean verbally acknowledging staff members during an office meeting or sending an email to their supervisor noting their excellent work in contributing to sustainability efforts.
5. Introduce new employees to Work Green. Start by sharing the list of Work Green activities, set power management and IT settings on printers and computers, and walk through the office pointing out recycling receptacles. Use this resource as a guide.
6. Utilize the Georgia Tech Green Event Guide. Find the Green Event Guide here.
7. Participate in campus green events. Georgia Tech offers many sustainability-focused events throughout the year, including Earth Day, Bike Week and Tech Beautification Day. Office participation can be as easy as taking your lunch break to walk through the event or by volunteering.
8. Volunteer at a community service event.  Georgia Tech is dedicated to making the world a better place. There are numerous organizations around Atlanta through which you can engage to give back to your community. The Division of Student Affairs is a great resource, not just got students, for finding volunteer opportunities.

# Energy & Water Efficiency

Electricity generation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. Commercial buildings play a significant role, consuming 19% of the electricity generated. More than half of that energy is used for heating and lighting, although it also takes a considerable amount of energy to deliver and treat the water you use every day. Letting your faucet run for five minutes uses about as much energy as letting a 60-watt light bulb run for 14 hours.[1]

1. Enable sleep mode on all printers, copiers, and computers. Work with your office's IT support staff to ensure that sleep mode is enabled on your devices.
2. Completely shut down electronics at the end of the day. Use our **Power Down checklist** to ensure electronics are turned off at night. Printers, monitors, computers, and other electronics drain significant amounts of power when not directly in use.
3. Reduce your electricity use by utilizing natural light. In addition to reducing your energy consumption, studies prove that access to natural light improves cognitive performance and aids our health and wellbeing.
4. Turn off lights when not in use during the day and at night.
5. Send "power-down" emails to all staff before long campus breaks. Use our **Power Down checklist** as a resource.
6. Do not use space heaters. Space heaters are less efficient than HVAC systems and are a fire hazard.
7. Work with your building's facilities management to control your office temperature. If occupants are too cold or too hot, reach out to your building manager. You can contact your building manager through the **Building Maintenance Requests** page.
8. Use tasks lights with LED bulbs. Task lighting better illuminates a workspace while using less energy by localizing the location of the light. Examples include desk lamps, reading lamps, and the under-cabinet lights.
9. Be conscious of conserving water at the sink and report leaks to our building's facilities manager. When washing your dishes or washing your hands, make sure to turn off the sink whenever possible. If you see a leak or hear one, make sure to report it right away. One leaking toilet can waste up 30 gallons of water a day.[2]

# Purchasing

One of the easiest ways to impact the environment is through our purchasing decisions. To understand the environmental impact of a product, one must consider the acquisition of the raw materials, production, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, reuse, operation, maintenance, and disposal. Each stage presents the potential to harm the environment, be it through the release of greenhouse gas emissions, pollutants to our waterways, or pollutants into our airways. Green purchasing decisions can reduce costs, strengthen markets for recyclable products, reduce our exposure to harmful chemicals, and save energy.

1. Consolidate orders (set a minimum order amount per order) when buying office supplies or equipment. Consolidating orders can reduce costs, create significant environmental savings in the form of reduced packaging waste and reduced transit related CO2 emissions.

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[1] https://www3.epa.gov/watersense/our_water/why_water_efficiency.html
[2] http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/pdf/ways_to_save_water/toilet_brochure.pdf

2. **Purchase recycled copy, computer, fax paper, folders, note-pads, post-its, and other paper products with a 20% minimum post-consumer waste content.**
3. **Use rechargeable batteries for office needs.**
4. **Make sure new electronic equipment and appliances are energy star rated. Energy Star is a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency program that identifies electronics with superior energy efficiency.**
5. **Re-use furniture or buy pre-used furniture through Surplus Property. Before your office goes to buy new furniture, contact Surplus Property to see if there is a pre-owned option. Click here for a list of furniture available.**
6. **We only purchase giveaway items that are made of recycled or recyclable, compostable, or reusable materials. Find our purchasing guide here.**

## Waste Management

**Making smart choices about what we buy, how we use it, and how we dispose of it can make a big difference in the amount of waste we produce and the greenhouse gas emissions associated with our consumption. The manufacture, distribution, and use of goods all require energy. This energy mostly comes from fossil fuels, which are the largest global source of greenhouse gas emissions. The most effective way to reduce waste is to not produce it in the first place.**

1. **Set double-sided printing as the default setting on all computers and printers.**
2. **Use reusable dishware, including coffee mugs, plates, silverware, etc. Through your department manager request the purchase of utensils and flatware for your office to use.**
3. **Do not use single-use beverage machines (e.g., K-Cups). To withstand the brewing process, coffee pods are made with four different layers of specialized plastic and topped with plastic foil, making them virtually un-recyclable and not biodegradable. In 2014, Keurig sold 9 billion K-cups, the majority of which likely ended up in landfills.[3] There are many alternatives to single-use beverage machines available through Buzzmart.**
4. **Do not use single-use plastic water bottles. Out of the 50 billion bottles of water bought each year, 80% end up in the landfill.**
5. **Make advanced recycling options available to our staff. At a minimum, an office space should accommodate centralized recycling collection for office paper, cardboard, plastics (#1-7), and metals. These materials should be sorted according to the needs of your recycling provider. Please contact the Georgia Tech Office of Solid Waste Management & Recycling for details. Consider utilizing Georgia Tech's AWARE Program.**
6. **Recycle all electronic waste through Surplus Property. If you have a state-owned computer or electronics to be disposed of (whether inventoried or non-inventoried), contact the Property Coordinator for your department. He or she will fill out the proper paperwork to have your equipment picked up and taken to Surplus Property for recycling. Personally owned computers and electronics can be recycled at Georgia Tech's Earth Day Celebration each April.**
7. **Recycle batteries through Georgia Tech's Environmental Health & Safety, Hazardous Materials Office. Small and medium rechargeable and non-rechargeable batteries may be recycled by dropping them off at one of the five battery recycling bins on campus: Barnes & Noble book store, Burdell's, Student Center information desk, ORGT at CRC, and the**

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[3] https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/03/the-abominable-k-cup-coffee-pod-environment-problem/386501/

Library information desk. Offices who would like to set up their own battery recycling containers should contact **Environmental Health & Safety**.

## Safe & Healthy Office Environment

**A healthy environment includes healthy people.**

1. **Purchase at least 1 plant per 10 people in our office. House plants deter illness, clean the air, boost healing, and improve productivity.**
2. **Use environmentally preferable cleaners (dish soap, hand soap, cleaning supplies, etc.). Many commercial cleaning products contain chemicals that contribute to dangerous pollution in our water systems. Some also degrade the indoor air quality of a building, contributing to conditions such as asthma. Environmentally-preferred cleaners can be purchased by utilizing the Green Seal program.**
3. **Walk for at least 20 minutes a day. Spend time outdoors every day to get fresh air and to boost your vitamin D intake, improving energy levels and mood. No walking trip on campus takes more than 20 minutes, use our walking guide to help lead the way.**
4. **Participate in the Certified Healthy program lead by the Office of Health and Wellbeing. Check out this program here.**

## Transportation

**Transportation is a major contributor to global climate change. It accounts for 14% of the world's total carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel combustion[4]. By increasing eco-friendly alternative transportation options, you are helping mitigate harmful environmental impacts caused by a large amount of vehicle use. Georgia Tech is a national leader in supporting alternative transportation commute options, with over 43 percent of campus students and employees taking advantage of clean commute programs.**

1. **Make sure officemates are aware of public transport and carpooling/ bicycling options on campus. For more information on sustainable transportation options offered at Georgia Tech and in Atlanta, visit our page here. Georgia Tech encourages faculty and staff to use public transit by offering discounted passes available through payroll deduction (information here) or at the BuzzCard Office on campus (information here).**
2. **Offer telecommuting options when applicable and when it fits job function. Georgia Tech provides a variety of flexible working arrangements to enable employees to serve customers, meet Institute and departmental goals, and balance personal and professional responsibilities. Click here for Georgia Tech's Flexwork Policy.**
3. **Aim to have at least 25% of your office utilizing alternative forms of transit, including public transit, carpools, biking, or walking to and from work.**

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[4] https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/global-greenhouse-gas-emissions-data#Sector

# Innovation

1. **Innovation points for new and creative strategies. Offices can earn extra points for implementing creative some innovative sustainability strategies in their work places. Click here for more information on Innovation Points.**