

ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT

For churches, temples, community halls, and small businesses

Here is a simple environmental audit that you can conduct to measure your organization's progress in integrating earth-wiser lifestyle habits.

Anyone can conduct an audit. First, choose an audit team. Your team can be made up of members of your leadership team, your environmental committee, or any group of people from your organization who will take some time to do it. To conduct your audit, the audit team should review your organization's procedures, and answer each of the following questions "Yes" or "No."

Part A. Energy (electricity and gas):

1. Do you know how much electricity and natural gas you use?
2. Do you keep your thermostat at 68 or lower in the winter? At 78 or higher in the summer?
3. Do you turn off lights, heat, fans, and air conditioning when the building is not in use? Do you turn off all possible appliances (like computers, copiers, media centers, battery chargers) when they are not in use?
4. Has proper insulation been provided in buildings? Has caulking been applied around windows?
5. For summer heat, do you use shades, cross-ventilation, attic vent fans, and other simple cooling devices?
6. Do you use energy-saving light bulbs?
7. Do you use clean and renewable energy sources? If your power company offers a "green power" program for renewably sourced power, have you subscribed?
8. As you replace products and appliances, are you making "power-down" (energy free) selections?

Part B. Water:

9. Do you know how much water you use?
10. Do you practice water conservation all the time, not just when drought restrictions require it?
11. Have you installed low flow aerators on all taps? High efficiency toilets?
12. Have you had your water checked for lead content and other pollutants?
13. Do you serve filtered tap water, rather than bottled water, at meetings and events?
14. Have you matched landscaping plants to your climate? Have you eliminated unused lawn areas?
15. If you use landscaping irrigation, is it efficient in water use (drip, soaker, climate controlled timer)?
16. Do you collect rainwater (with rainwater barrels or with appropriate grading) for watering landscape areas?

Part C. Air pollution:

17. Have you declared your site a smoke-free zone?
18. Have you had your air checked for asbestos, radon, and other pollutants?
19. Do you use a push-mower on any remaining lawn areas? Have you eliminated leaf-blowers?

Part D. Cleaning:

20. Do you use low-impact cleaners such as baking soda, vinegar, and lemon juice?
21. Do you use organic techniques rather than chemical pesticides?

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22. Do you avoid the use of toxic products (batteries, cleaning supplies, paint) whenever possible?

Part E. Solid waste:

23. Do you recycle? Paper and cardboard? Glass? Aluminum? Plastic?

24. Is the number of document copies you make consistent with need so that waste is minimized? Do you use paper efficiently by using both sides?

25. Do you buy products (such as copier paper, toilet paper) made from recycled material? Do you try to eliminate unnecessary packaging?

26. Do you use reusable items (such as china, plasticware, mugs, silverware, cloth dish towels, cloth napkins) at meetings, dinners, coffee hours, and other functions?

27. Is the amount of food served consistent with need so that waste is minimized?

28. Do you use a compost bin for your yard waste, kitchen scraps, and coffee grounds?

29. Have you contacted mail preference services and catalogs with a notice to remove your organization's name from their mailing list?

30. Do you "unshop" by buying only things that you really need? Do you make it a practice to buy products that can be reused or repaired? Do you discard goods and products only after their useful life is over?

31. Do you dispose of toxic products (like batteries, fluorescent light bulbs, old chemicals) through proper means, as designated by your local government?

Part F. Landscaping:

32. If your building has large surrounding grounds, is part of your land used as a wildlife sanctuary, with native trees, shrubs and ground cover chosen to provide food and shelter for birds and small mammals and to reduce the need for water and fertilizer? If your building has small surrounding grounds, do you have wildflower patches or small areas dedicated to preserving the natural environment?

33. Do you use organic methods rather than chemical pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers?

34. Have you planted trees to shade buildings and reduce energy costs?

35. Have you devoted any portion of your grounds to edible landscaping, to grow locally-sourced food?

Part G. Travel:

36. Does your parking lot offer bike racks?

37. Are group members/parishioners encouraged to carpool, use mass transit, and to walk or bike whenever possible?

38. Do you keep resource conservation--such as travelling miles--in mind when selecting and planning activities? Do you avoid encouraging air flights, particularly "short hop" flights under 500 miles?

Part H. Activities:

39. Do you discuss the needs of the environment throughout the year?

40. Do you sponsor programs on the environment? Joint environmental activities with other organizations? Do you support environmental organizations and activities in your area?

Summary.

Total number of questions answered "Yes": _____ Total number of questions answered "No": _____

Each question that was answered "Yes" indicates that you are doing your part to uphold our commitment to the Earth. Now the audit team should work build a plan to attack the ones that were checked "No."

And - save this audit and try it again in one year. See how much your score has improved by then.

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Environmental Change-Making: How to Cultivate Lasting Change in Your Community