



Green living in the office

Being an environmentally friendly person should not just be something you do at home, but should also be a way of life when you are at work. Many of us become less conscientious about saving electricity, mainly because it is not our money which we are spending. If we aren't paying for the lighting bill, why switch off the light?

However it is affecting our environment, and as we have all experienced load shedding, we know that electricity is not an unlimited resource. And nor are our forests. As employees we need to be more conscious of what we use in the office and how we can be more eco-friendly in our second living space.

How can you reduce the use of paper at work?

- Instead of shredding paper which has been printed on one side only, staple these papers together and use the blank side as a notebook.
- Ask yourself, "Do I really need to print this? Should I send a pdf instead?"
- When printing PowerPoint slides, print two or more slides per page.
- Print on both sides of the paper. This is possible on your smaller printers as well as the large printers – ask your computer guru to show you how.
- Discuss with your manager how your unit can begin to recycle paper.



How can you save electricity in the office?

- Turn off computers, printers, office and corridor lights when you have finished work for the day.
- Set your computer to use a blank screensaver when you are away from your desk. Screensavers use less electricity. Set it to come on if you are away from your desk for longer than 3 minutes.
- You can further green your computer by simply dimming the brightness of your screen. Not only will this help save energy, but it lessens the harsh effect on your eyes.
- All Windows computers have a "power save" option. Once enabled, this feature will allow your computer to go to sleep between times of non-use. Go to your Control Panel on your computer to find out how.



- Remember to switch off all gadgets when you leave for the day. Don't leave anything on standby as this is still using power.
- Even when cell phone and laptop chargers are not charging a gadget, they continue to draw electricity while plugged in. Rather remove the charger completely from the socket when you are done.

You may think that by applying these changes you aren't making much of a difference to the environment, but when you work out how many watts you will be saving and how many trees, you can be reassured that you deserve a pat on the back for contributing towards a greener future. Small changes make all the difference.



What are you doing to save the planet?

Please feel free to share any tips as to how we can all become carbon neutral. If you or your family are part of any environmentally friendly project, please let us know so that we can share these success stories with everyone.

Please e-mail your tips, projects and comments to Better.Together@pgwc.gov.za or call us on **021 483 3806**.

