

Bright Green Tips

*The CCOC guide to
going green in your home.*



Why Go Green?

According to David Suzuki, a renowned Canadian scientist, if everyone lived the way the average Canadian does, we would need FIVE planet Earths to take care of all our needs!

Surveys show that more than 80% of Canadians feel that sustainability should be a top or high national priority.

The surveys also show that most Canadians think other people don't care about sustainability.

The buildings we live and work in have a huge impact on the environment. They use 1/3 of our total energy, 2/3 of our electricity and are responsible for 16% of our freshwater use!

CCOC is already working towards making our buildings more sustainable.

Did you know that CCOC has:

- Installed low-flow showerheads in most units! Low-flow models can cut the flow of water by 40 to 60%.
- Installed low-flow toilets in most units.
- Installed faucet aerators in most units.
- Outfitted all its laundry rooms with cold-water washing machines.
- The common spaces and hallways in most CCOC buildings are lit by T8 fluorescent tubes. These are the most efficient fluorescent tubes you can buy, and they are up to 30% more efficient than the old T12 tubes,
- CCOC is replacing its light bulbs with Compact Fluorescent bulbs as the old incandescent ones burn out.

We're already on our way to sustainability. But going green is a global movement, and we can't do it alone. Read on to find out how you can help.



What is Sustainability?

“Sustainability is living in a way that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

~ Jim McNeil, The Brundtland Report

Or:

Enough for All, Forever

There are a lot of good reasons to make your home more sustainable:

- Save money by making your home more energy-efficient.
- Enjoy a healthier, more comfortable home by using more natural products.
- Help preserve Ontario’s natural beauty and natural resources by reducing your impact on them.
- Help reduce the effects of climate change.

Now it’s time to do your part! Go room by room through your home and put the tips in this booklet into action! You might be surprised at how easy going green can be. Become a Green Leader in your community and help CCOC become a sustainable housing provider.



Kitchen

Top Tips!

Fridge: Vacuum the coils (on the back) and the air intake grille (below the door) of your fridge every 3 months.

Stovetop: Choose pots that match the size of the element. Try not to use bent or deformed pots and pans because they use more energy to get hot.

When you cook, use lids that fit tight and keep them on while you cook.

Oven: Use the oven window to check food as it cooks. Opening the door lets out about 20% of the heat.

Appliances: Use your microwave or toaster oven to cook or warm small portions of food instead of using the oven, especially in the summer.

Dishwashing: Washing dishes by hand in a sink (without the water running) and rinsing them in a basin of cold water is the most energy-efficient way.



“Anything else you’re interested in is not going to happen if you can’t breathe the air and drink the water. Don’t sit this one out. Do something.”

- Carl Sagan



Do More!

Fridge: Make sure there is enough air space (about 5 cm) between the fridge and the walls. Don't leave the fridge door open.

Stovetop: Keep the trays under the elements clean so that they reflect the heat up towards the pots as efficiently as possible.

Oven: Preheat your oven only when you really need to (i.e. for pastry or bread). Try not to preheat for more than 10 minutes.

Appliances: Your electric kettle is the most energy-efficient method for heating water. Boil only as much water as you need each time. Unplug appliances when you are not using them to avoid "phantom power."



Bedrooms: *Temperature & Air Quality*

Top Tips!

Heating: In the winter, keep the curtains and shades on your windows open during the day to let the sun in. Keep them closed at night to keep the heat in and the cold out.

Cooling: In the summer, open your windows at night and close them and any curtains during the day to keep the sun out. Use white window shades, drapes or blinds to help reflect heat away from the house.

Fans: Use fans instead of air conditioners. A fan uses only one tenth the energy of an air conditioner. If you must use an air conditioner, turn the temperature setting up as high as possible so that it only runs when you really need it.

Temperature: Here are some suggested thermostat settings for common activities at home:

- Sitting - 21 degrees
- Working - 20 degrees
- Sleeping - 16 degrees
- No one home - 16 degrees



“We thrive and survive on planet earth as a single human family. And one of our main responsibilities is to leave to successor generations a sustainable future.”

- General Kofi A. Annan



Do More!

- During the winter, dress warmly and think about setting your thermostat lower at night.
- Keep baseboard heaters and radiators clean. Dirt and dust absorb heat and reduce heat output.
- Keep your windows clean to let in the winter sun.
- Get your air conditioner ready for winter. The best option is to remove your window air conditioning unit completely for the heating season.
- Windows can cause up to 25 percent of total house heat loss. Indoor caulking or weather-stripping are cheap and easy ways to seal up any cracks around your windows. Another option for older, leaky wooden windows is to install clear plastic sealed films over the windows during the winter to keep the cold air away. Remember that caulking and weatherstripping will also help your home's energy performance in the summertime by keeping the cool air inside and the muggy air outside. **Window sealing kits are available through CCOC's Maintenance Office.**



Living Room: *Lighting and Entertainment*

Top Tips!

Lighting: Turn off the light when you leave the room. The energy used to turn a light off and on again is the same as one or two seconds of normal use. Turning off the lights when you're done with them is the best way to save energy and money, no matter what kind of lights you use.

Electricity: Anything that can be turned on with a remote control, that has a digital clock or little coloured lights uses energy all the time, even when it is turned off. This is called “phantom load” and it happens in most appliances in your home! Either unplug these things when you are not using them or plug them into a power bar that you can turn off at the end of the day.



“In the long term, the economy and the environment are the same thing. If it’s unenvironmental it is uneconomical. That is the rule of nature.”

- Mollie Beattie



Do More!

Lighting

- Use compact fluorescent lights (CFLs). They are much more efficient than regular (incandescent) bulbs and last 6 to 10 times longer. CFLs cost more than incandescent bulbs, but they pay for themselves by saving energy over their lifetime.
- Instead of brightly lighting the whole room, put the light just where you need it.
- Dirty windows let in less light, and dirty light bulbs, fixtures and shades put out less light, so keep them clean.
- Use LED holiday lights instead of incandescent ones.

Electricity

- Use rechargeable batteries for things like cordless phones. In the long run, this is cheaper than using throwaway batteries.
- Screen savers for your computer do not actually save energy. Switching to sleep mode or turning your monitor off is always more efficient.
- Laptop computers use less energy than desktop PCs.



Bathroom

Top Tip!

Take showers instead of baths. A five-minute shower uses only about one-half as much water as a bath.

Do More!

- Avoid flushing the toilet unless you have to: “If it’s yellow let it mellow, if it’s brown flush it down!”
- Throw out tissues and other waste in the trash rather than the toilet.
- Don’t let water run while shaving, washing your face or brushing your teeth.
- Put a recycling bin in the bathroom.



“There must be a better way to make the things we want, a way that doesn’t spoil the sky, or the rain or the land”.

- Sir Paul McCartney



Laundry

Top Tip!

Save energy by washing full loads of clothes only and using cool water and cold water detergents. 85% of the energy used for washing clothes is used just to heat the water! Washing in warm water uses only half the energy of washing in hot water, and is just as effective for most loads of clothes, especially if you use cold water detergents. Only wash in hot water when you really need to.

Do More!

- Dry your clothes outside or use an indoor rack set near a sunny window that you can open during the summer.
- You can reduce dryer costs as well: clean the lint filter after every load to improve air circulation and make sure the vent is not blocked.
- If you dry more than one load, do the second load right away so the dryer doesn't cool down.
- Don't over-dry clothes.
- Don't use dryer sheets., which are full of harmful chemicals.



Shopping Tips

Our shopping habits have an impact too!

Here are some things you can try to reduce the impact of your shopping:

Buy Less Stuff! Ask yourself if you really need it. Can you re-use something you already have? Can you borrow or rent it?

Buy Recycled! Read the label for the products or packaging with the biggest percentage of post-consumer recycled content. This shows how much of the material has been used before. Try to buy paper products that have more than 50 percent post-consumer content.

Buy Local! Support your local farmers and neighbours as much as you can by buying local and organic foods that are in season from a farmer's market or through a community shared agriculture box. It's good for the Ontario economy and it cuts down on the fossil fuels used to transport food. Also, you may not have to go far to buy your local food.

Reduce the harmful chemicals your family is exposed to by choosing products that are free from dangerous chemicals. Cosmetics, cleaners, air fresheners and detergents can have ingredients that are poisonous or dangerous to people. Laundry products can also contain chemicals that can build up in your clothes and cause allergies. Make sure you use products that are safe for you and your family. You'll feel better and also reduce the amount of chemicals you flush into the environment.

Think Globally Act Locally! Who made the product and under what conditions? Look for "fair trade" labels on products like coffee and clothing. This means that the item was made under fair working conditions.



Trash Tips

What comes in must go out! Be aware of the amount and type of waste you produce. Here are some things to think about when you throw stuff out:

Reuse! Choose sturdy products, and repair the things you can. Use reusable food containers instead of tinfoil and plastic wrap for leftovers. Try cloth rags instead of paper towels for cleaning. Remember to bring reusable water bottles and coffee mugs rather than disposable plastic bottles and juice boxes.

Compost! Did you know that you can compost most of your organic kitchen waste? This can help reduce the amount of waste going to landfills.

Recycle! Paper, cans, and plastic bottles are easy to start with, and more materials can be added as your family gets used to recycling.

Return unused or old electronics to a recycling depot. Electronics contain dangerous materials like lead and mercury. Recycle your old televisions, stereos and computer monitors and keep hazardous chemicals out of the water and landfill.

Take expired medications back to your pharmacy where they can be disposed of safely. If you flush expired medications down the toilet or throw them in the garbage they will only wind up in streams, rivers, the ocean or landfills.



Do it yourself!

Take Action and Take Responsibility!

Get the most of your laundry: Use cold water detergents to get the best clean in cold-water washing machines. Detergents that are designed for cold water washing will be more efficient than those designed for washing in hot water. According to Consumer & Corporate Affairs Canada, cold-water detergents are just as effective as hot-water detergents.

Check for toilet tank leaks by adding food coloring to the tank. If the toilet is leaking, color will appear in the bowl within 30 minutes. If you see color in your toilet bowl, **call CCOC maintenance to fix the leak.** Flush as soon as the test is done to remove the food coloring and avoid staining the tank.

Check your vents: Set up your furniture and drapes so they do not get in the way of the vents or heaters. If warm air from a forced air system comes into the room through a badly placed air vent (for example, under a piece of furniture), direct the air out into the room with an air scoop. The cheap, scoop-shaped devices attach over the vent with magnets. You can buy these at any hardware store.

Check the seals on your fridge: Clean the rubber seals then close the door on a piece of paper or a business card. If you can pull the card out easily, the seal is leaking. **Call CCOC Maintenance to have them fix it.**



Pick up the Phone!

What Can CCOC do for me?

Fix the leak! A dripping faucet can waste a bathtub full of water in one day! **Call CCOC Maintenance to fix any leaky faucets in your unit.**

Caulking and Weatherstripping! You can use a heavy-duty, clear plastic sheet on a frame or tape clear plastic film to the inside of your window frames during the cold winter months to keep the drafts out. Remember, the plastic must be sealed tightly to the frame to help reduce cold air drafts. CCOC has winter window kits available that come with plastic sheeting. **Call CCOC Maintenance for a kit and instructions on how to install it.**

Composting and Recycling: If you compost regularly, you can divert up to 25% of your household waste away from the landfill. **Contact CCOC's Membership and Communications office to get a kitchen composter, an apartment sized recycling bin, and information on how to get started.**

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

- Margaret Mead



Many thanks to the Green Team members who helped make this guide:

Anke, Bev, Brian, Carol, Eglá Kandie, Edith, Guy, Giang, Hemalatha, Jacynthe, Jessica, Lisa, Mary Ellen, Doris, Nina, Rod, Trish, Pierre, Zeinab, Zony.

We'd love to have you on our Green Team, too!

Contact CCOC's Membership and Communications Department at 613 234 4065 ext. 240 for more information about the Green Team and the CCOC Go Green Project.



With support provided by the Community Go Green Fund.



Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation, 2008.