



## 10 Easy Tips for Going Green

*Prepared by Environmental & Energy Advisory Commission*

- 1. Replace an incandescent light bulb with a compact fluorescent light bulb (CEL).** CFLs use 60 percent less energy than incandescent bulbs. Changing five of the most frequently used light bulbs in your home can save up to \$100 per year on your electricity bill. If every American home did this, it would produce the same reduction in greenhouse gases as taking eight million cars off the road. CFLs should last several years, but when they do finally burn out, don't throw them in the trash because they contain a small amount of mercury. Take them to the nearest hazardous waste disposal facility. (For disposal information, see the *Oak Park Recycling Resource Guide* or visit [www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org).)
- 2. Adjust your thermostat.** About half the energy we use in our homes goes to heating and cooling. Adjusting your thermostat two degrees down in the winter and up in the summer can eliminate about 2000 pounds of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) per year. If you have a programmable thermostat, lower it significantly at night and during times when no one will be at home. If you don't have a programmable thermostat, consider installing one.
- 3. Choose energy efficient appliances.** *Energy Star* qualified appliances use 10 percent to 50 percent less energy than standard models. If every household in the United States replaced existing appliances with the most efficient appliances available, we would eliminate 175 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions each year.
- 4. Unplug your computer.** Home office equipment such as computers and printers are energy hogs. Reduce their energy consumption during the day by using the power management feature to turn off the monitor after a designated period and to activate *system standby*, which sends the computer components into low power mode while you are not working. Reduce your energy consumption at night by plugging electronics into a surge protector/power strip and turning the strip off at the end of the day, after powering down your equipment. If you have an internet cable connection, plug it into a separate outlet and keep it on.
- 5. Turn down the hot water.** Set your hot water heater no higher than 120 degrees. If your hot water heater is more than 12 years old, consider wrapping it in an insulating blanket. Together, these, simple steps can eliminate about 1,500 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> from the air each year. In the laundry room, use cold water whenever possible. Ninety percent of the energy consumed by your clothes washer is used to heat the water, not to run the motor. You can save \$300 - \$400 per year on your gas or electric bill by using cold water.

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6. **Keep cool.** Keep your air conditioner operating efficiently by cleaning or replacing a dirty air filter and performing regular maintenance on the unit. Reduce the amount of work your air conditioner has to do by closing shades on windows with direct sun exposure.
7. **Keep your lawn green.** Reduce emissions by switching from a gas-powered mower to an electric or push mower.
8. **Plant a tree.** A single tree will absorb one ton of CO<sub>2</sub> over its lifetime. Shade provided by trees can also reduce your air conditioning bill by 10 percent to 15 percent.
9. **Recycle.** You can eliminate 2,400 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions each year by recycling half of the waste your household generates. You can also reduce emissions by purchasing recycled paper products, which require 70 percent to 90 percent less energy to produce.
10. **Ride your bike to the Farmer's Market.** Avoiding 10 miles of driving per week would eliminate about 5,000 of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per year. You also help reduce emissions further by purchasing locally grown foods. The average meal in the United States travels 1,200 miles from the farm to the plate. And if the locally grown foods you buy are organic, you can have an even bigger impact. Organic soils capture and store more CO<sub>2</sub> than conventionally farmed soil. If all corn and soybeans were grown organically, we could remove 580 billion pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere.

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