



Good low-cost things you can do at home or in the office

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Most of my articles that have appeared in New York Real Estate Journal focus on case studies of companies who have upgraded smartly to save significant energy costs, new energy regulations, etc. Good things, I hope, to help your building or company and your career. But here are some useful energy and environmental tips for you to use at your properties and in fact in your own personal home to save you, your tenants, and your family money because we all know that energy is a growing portion of everyone's household budget and a happy tenant (and family) with more money in the pocket is good for you. Feel free to use these to put together your own list to provide to your tenants and employees so you can have a hand in making their lives better and therefore, engender greater support.

1. Buy Energy Star-labeled products. This joint EPA/DOE program lists the most energy efficient products in a category. Such products are typically a little more expensive upfront than non-Energy Star rated equivalents, but pay back that difference in a short time. Energy Star covers household and office items like laptops, refrigerators, TVs, printers, etc. University studies have shown that this is the most cost-effective way to reduce your energy costs. Make this part of your personal and business purchasing policy
2. Convert lighting to LEDs. After some initial problems, LEDs are now reliable and here to stay. LEDs are made for nearly every application in a home or office now, and can be dimmed or similarly controlled. Yes, they are more expensive upfront, but make it up in both energy savings and in their longevity (much fewer replacements and trips up the ladder), reducing your staff's risk of an accident.
3. Your car. Certainly, a car with a high mpg rating will provide major cost savings and fewer trips to the gas station. But it also means lower emissions of toxic compounds from the tailpipe and lower exposure to your family and others. With that in mind, minimize the idling you may do at your children's school, the office parking lot, the supermarket, etc. Carpool with neighbors and encourage them not to idle either. Many locales have a law against it already.
4. Your clothing. Choose a dry cleaner that does not use "PERC", a toxic compound. PERC can stick to your clothes and be slowly released and build up in the contained space of your closets, office, or on your body, where it can be absorbed into your bloodstream. "Green" cleaners are popping up in a lot of communities.
5. Your indoor air. We all spend more time indoors whether at home or in the office, so the quality of that air we or our customers breathe is important. Be careful if you "freshen" a room with scented candles or air freshener. The chemicals contained in air fresheners, while smelling nice, and released from burning candles may be harmful. Consider opening a few windows regularly (if it is

safe) to let in fresh air, such as on a summer night. Also, consider reading labels and buying "green" floor, furniture, and carpet cleaning products to minimize volatile toxic compounds in the indoor air and "natural" pesticides or other pest control strategies.

6. Your food and water. Of course, there is no precise formula for a diet that will make us live longer. What we should eat or drink is up to us. However, we all can agree that it is best not to re-heat food stored in plastic in the microwave. This can cause leaching of chemicals from the plastic container or wrap onto your food. Be aware of your municipal water. Most meet regulatory standards. You may not need to provide bottled water to customers, saving you cost. If you are concerned, use a filter and store in glass or steel containers and minimize plastic.

CCES has the experts to help you design and implement technical upgrades to help your commercial space use less energy and to reduce the environmental and health impacts on you, your staff, tenants, and customers.

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