

Take the Stairs Suggestions for a more sustainable workplace.

Your Energy Committee would like you to consider these suggestions for a greener workplace.

1. **Switch off artificial lights and use natural light.** Artificial lights consume power – natural light is free. If not in use, switch off the lights at meeting rooms.
2. **Choose energy efficient light bulbs.** Less energy spent means less money wasted on electricity bills. If your workplace does not get enough natural light during the daytime, you can opt for **low wattage lights**. You can also replace existing bulbs with CFL or LED lights. They consume less power and last for longer periods of time.
3. **Switch off equipment** when not in use. Just like with lights, make sure that you switch off and plug out all equipment when not in use. This includes air conditioners, coffee vending machines, hand dryers, microwaves, printers, copiers, and scanners during weekends or holidays. These electrical devices continue to drain power even if they are plugged in. This is sometimes called standby energy consumption.
4. **Choose Laptops over Desktops.** Laptops typically consume less energy compared to desktops, so keep this in mind when buying your workplace equipment. Opt for laptops whenever possible. The **monitor size** also contributes to the amount of energy consumed. While graphic designers and people from similar lines of work cannot work on small screens, there are a lot of other employees in your company whose work doesn't depend on the huge monitors.
5. **Use hibernation feature on all computers.** Advise everyone to put their computers in hibernation mode if they take a break or go to a meeting. This applies to any situation when an employee won't be using it for a long period of time. The hibernation feature in computers allows users to save existing work as it is and continue working at the exact same point upon return. Employees [can set their computers to go into the hibernation mode](#) when they are inactive for several minutes.
6. **Use energy saving features of all devices.** Make sure that your employees are aware of the energy-saving features of appliances and other electronics like the printers, microwaves, and air conditioners.
Most of the modern devices have these options and they are usually very easy to use. In most cases, it is a matter of pressing a button or adjusting a setting feature. Advise everyone to use these features to **help cut energy costs**.
7. **Upgrade all outdated equipment.** Old electrical equipment that is no longer working at their maximum efficiency could only **draw unnecessary power**, costing you more money. It's best to replace your old office appliances with new certified energy efficient ones.
8. **Buy energy efficient devices.** Energy efficient devices may cost more upfront but they're going to consume less, saving you more money in the long run. Their price is decreasing, because, nowadays, being energy efficient is becoming a standard that a lot of companies try to keep.

9. Consider Solar Power. [Solar power](#) can offer your business long-term price certainty that may protect against rising costs and regulatory changes. It can also be a valuable tool in your overall energy strategy with little or no up-front costs. **Solar Investment** The Solar Investment Tax Credit (SITC) – a 30 percent federal tax credit for solar systems installed at businesses – has been extended through 2019, making it a great time to invest in solar energy.⁵ After 2019, the SITC will scale down incrementally through 2021 and remain at 10 percent permanently starting in 2022.⁶ Check out this [solar checklist](#) to help decide if solar is right for your business.

10. Participate in a Demand Response program. Demand Response is a load management program that pays participants to reduce electricity usage during periods of peak demand across the system. With the Direct Energy Business Demand Response program, large businesses can earn potential monthly income by curtailing their electricity usage during times of significant stress on the grid. Depending on your business size, type and location you may be able to participate. Visit our [Demand Response](#) page to learn more.