

Workplace Environmental Health Checklist



MAKE YOUR
WORKPLACE MORE
ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY



Thunder Bay District
Health Unit

THERE ARE MANY TYPES OF CONTAMINANTS FOUND IN THE INDOOR AND OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT THAT CAN AFFECT OUR HEALTH. THEY CAN BE FOUND IN AIR, SOIL, DUST, WATER, FOOD AND CONSUMER PRODUCTS.

We cannot control everything about our environment, but simple lifestyle changes you do at your workplace can create a healthier environment and decrease the risks of certain illnesses.





This handy checklist can help identify what you are currently doing, and what changes you can make, to improve your workplace environment. Also, look for this 'Earth Guy' logo to check out things you can do to help save energy and the planet.








I am
doing

I plan
to do

At the Workstation

		Turn off your computer when you leave for lunch, long meetings, or for the night	
		Wear well fitted hearing protection such as earplugs or earmuffs when working in areas with loud noise	
		Turn off the lights when no one is in the room or office space	
		Roll up the blinds to get natural light	
		Use an external hard drive to store extra documents instead of keeping a printed copy	
		Dust regularly using a damp cloth to prevent dust buildup, especially around electronics like computers	
		Clean your keyboard using a small reusable brush or rag; avoid using cans of compressed air	
		Reduce or eliminate the use of scented personal care products such as perfumes and hand products	
		Use alternatives to scented office products such as scent-free markers, soaps	
		Avoid strongly scented cleaning products	
		Avoid using room deodorizers and air fresheners	
		Avoid eating and drinking at your desk	






		Wash all fruits and veggies well with water	
		Wash your hands with soap and warm water before eating	
		Encourage your workplace to use eco-friendly dish detergent	
		Pack a litter-less lunch for work using reusable containers	
		Use reusable dishes and cutlery instead of disposable ones	
		Allow food to cool before putting it into plastic containers	
		Transfer food to a glass dish to re-heat in the microwave	
		Use glass or stainless steel instead of plastic containers and plastic wrap	
		Use a mug instead of disposable cups	
		Use plastics with the recycling labels #1, #2, #4 and #5 on the bottom, they are safer choices. Avoid #3, #6, and #7	
		Replace plastic shopping bags with reusable "eco-friendly" bags to carry your lunch; try 100% organic cotton canvas bags	
		Use cloth tablecloths instead of vinyl tablecloths	
		Clean off counters and tables with soap and water after each use	
		Keep the fridge clean; use baking soda as an eco-friendly alternative for cleaning and deodorizing	







I am doing I plan to do

In the Washroom/Change room

		Turn lights off when leaving the bathroom	
		Use eco-friendly soap; avoid the use of antibacterial products	
		Use paper towels made from recycled materials	
		Ensure adequate ventilation, especially in rooms with excess water vapour – like bathrooms	
		Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth	
		Shower as soon as you can, especially if you work with harmful chemicals such as pesticides; also encourage the use of alternatives	
		Wash your work clothes separately from your family's clothes if you work with harmful chemicals	
		Buy a vinyl-free shower curtain, or air a new vinyl shower curtain outside to release the chemical smell ("off-gassing")	




I am doing I plan to do **In the Copy Room**

		Place photocopiers in a separate room with proper ventilation	
		Copy and print documents only when necessary and use the double-sided feature whenever possible	
		Instead of making individual copies for everyone, circulate one copy using a distribution list	
		Commit to using e-mail communication for memos	
		Purchase recycled paper – the best kind is 100% recycled with little or no chlorine bleach used	

I am doing I plan to do **In the Storage Room**





		Ensure there is proper ventilation when working with chemicals, paints, solvents, and glues; look for “low VOC” products
		Ensure furniture and cabinets made from particle board have a plastic laminate or coating on all sides, or have them sealed to protect against formaldehyde contained inside
		Dispose of cleaning products safely and properly
		Encourage your cleaning staff to use eco-friendly products

I am doing I plan to do **In the Maintenance Room**

		Ensure fuel-burning appliances are well-maintained and inspected yearly by a professional	
		Regularly clean and disinfect humidifiers, de-humidifiers, and air conditioners	
		Have any leaks in the roof, walls, or plumbing fixed so mould cannot grow	
		If using a washer/dryer at work – beware that dryer lint contains many chemicals; therefore, it is important for pregnant women not to handle it	

I am doing I plan to do








To and From Work

		Walk, bike or take public transit to work when possible 
		Carpool with colleagues or neighbours 
		Drive the speed limit
		Turn off your car when idling for more than 10 seconds
		Go inside to get your morning coffee rather than using the drive-thru
		Ensure your tires are inflated properly to improve fuel performance 
		Do not smoke in your vehicle (it is illegal if it is a work vehicle or children under 16 are present)
		Use heat and air conditioning in your vehicle sparingly 



I am doing I plan to do

In the Office/Building

		Use the stairs instead of the elevator	
		Use scrap paper for messages or memos	
		If you work in an area that has a paper recycling service, consider starting a full recycling program	
		Switch to compact fluorescent bulbs and recycle them appropriately	
		Monitor and control humidity levels – keep the level between 40%-60%	
		Consider eliminating products made of vinyl (i.e. some children's toys in public areas, outerwear, some flooring and commercial- grade cling wrap)	
		Close window blinds or curtains at the end of the day	
		Invest in water and energy efficient appliances such as dishwashers, washing machines, and fridges	
		Recycle as much as you can. Thunder Bay only recycles #1 & 2 plastics	
		Dispose of electronic waste (e-waste) properly (i.e. TV's and computers)	
		Practice the 6 "R's" related to waste reduction: Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Recycle	



I am doing I plan to do

An Event at the Office

		Choose/specify reusable versus disposable dishware, cups and utensils - if it's the only option, choose paper over Styrofoam or plastic
		Choose paper napkins and towels made of recyclable product
		Choose washable and reusable linen tablecloths instead of plastic, or paper instead of vinyl for disposable
		Ask caterers to serve food on reusable trays rather than using disposable serving dishes
		Ensure beverages are not served in single serving containers, or ensure they are recyclable
		Choose foods for events that have minimal packaging, consider buying in bulk
		Have recycling bins available
		Source organic, local, and sustainable food whenever possible
		Use plants as organic centerpieces that can go home with guests, rather than eco-unfriendly balloons or tinsel decorations



Think Outside the Building

Take proper precautions if exposed to ultraviolet (UV) radiation outside:

- Wear sunscreen, UV protective eye wear, a wide brimmed hat, long-sleeved clothing, and take regular breaks in the shade
- Stay well hydrated by drinking plenty of water; increase the amount on hot/humid days
- Look for alternatives to gas powered machines; try a push type lawn mower
- When smog levels are high, especially in the afternoon, avoid or reduce strenuous activities outdoors
- Consider planting extra trees to increase shaded areas



Eco-Friendly Cleaning Alternatives

- **Eco-friendly Cleaning Product #1:** Vinegar. It's not just for fish and chips: vinegar is a natural all-purpose cleaner. Spritz away grime with a mix of one part water to one part vinegar (don't worry; the smell will dissipate when it dries).
- **Eco-friendly Cleaning Product #2:** Oil. Make your own furniture polish with one cup of vegetable or olive oil and a ½ cup of lemon juice.
- **Eco-friendly Cleaning Product #3:** Baking soda. A natural deodorizer, baking soda can be used as a non-abrasive cleanser for counters, ovens and bathroom fixtures. For extra power, add lemon juice to make a paste that will break down soap scum and mineral deposits on tiles.

Where can I get more information?

Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and the Environment
www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca

EarthWise Thunder Bay
www.earthwisethunderbay.com

EcoSuperior Environmental Programs
www.ecosuperior.com

Environment Canada - "Clean Air Online"
www.ec.gc.ca

Ministry of the Environment
www.ene.gc.ca/envision.guide/index.html

Thunder Bay District Health Unit
www.tbdhu.com and search "home environment"

DISTRICT OFFICES

Geraldton

P.O. Box 1360
510 Hogarth Avenue West
Geraldton, ON P0T 1M0
(807) 854-0454

Manitouwadge

P.O. Box 385
Manitouwadge Health Care Centre
1 Health Care Cres.
Manitouwadge, ON P0T 2C0
(807) 826-4061

Marathon

P.O. Box 384
Marathon Library Building
24 Peninsula Rd.
Marathon, ON P0T 2E0
(807) 229-1820

Nipigon

P.O. Box 15
Nipigon District Memorial Hospital
125 Hogan Rd.
Nipigon, ON P0T 2J0
(807) 887-3031

Schreiber

P.O. Box 698
Jack Stokes Medical Building
501 Scotia St.
Schreiber, ON P0T 2S0
(807) 824-2413