

Conserving the Environment at Work

Here is a list of environmental resources you can take advantage of as a UT staff member. These are easy ways to save the environment, and many of them help save money too! This resource guide is brought to you by the Staff Sustainability Network and UT's Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS). For an electronic copy and more information, visit <http://www.UTenvironment.org/staff/>

Recycling

Paper and Cardboard Recycling

When recycling, put your recyclables (not just white paper, but anything that tears, including cardboard) in one of the blue bins. The custodial staff then takes it to an outdoor pickup location, and it is taken to the recycling center. You can request additional blue bins by calling 471-8438.

Can and Bottle Recycling

UT does not have a campus-wide aluminum and plastic recycling program, but your office can sign up for the student-run program. The Campus Environmental Center (CEC), an agency of Student Government, coordinates recycling for aluminum cans and #1 and #2 plastics (i.e. soda bottles and milk jugs). Sign up at www.UTenvironment.org/recycling/

Ink Cartridge Recycling

There are several ink cartridge recycling programs on campus, but when you recycle with the Campus Environmental Center you help earn money for campus environmental projects! The CEC recycles ink and toner cartridges from all UT printers and copiers, as well as any ink cartridges you bring in from home. Email ink@UTenvironment.org or call 232-7840 to schedule a pickup.

Energy

Energy Conservation

With high fuel costs, being energy conscious is particularly important. There are five simple things you can do:

- Make light use of your thermostat. Keep it at 78 degrees or higher during the summer. Keep it at 72 or lower during the winter.
- Turn off your lights when you leave the office. Help set an example by turning off the lights in common areas (like copy rooms, break rooms, and restrooms) that are not being used.
- Arrange your office so you can use natural light sources as much as possible during the day.
- Put your computer monitor on sleep mode so it turns off when not in use.
- Only plug in "phantom loads" (phone chargers and electronics) when you need them. They draw electricity all the time, even when powered off. Or plug them into a power strip and turn the strip off when you leave the office. Turning off unnecessary electronic equipment during the day will also keep your office cooler, thus reducing the need for more air conditioning.

Water and Wildlife

Water Conservation

Water is precious here in Texas, and it's easy to minimize water use. Here are some tips:

- Turn off faucets when washing dishes, and turn them back on only to rinse.
- Report leaking faucets and running toilets to your Facilities Services zone shop (call 471-6188 if you don't know your zone shop's number).
- For leaking sprinklers or outdoor water leaks, call Landscape Services at 471-6888.

Storm Water Pollution

Rainwater naturally soaks into the ground where there is natural cover like grass, vegetation and trees. Where there is asphalt and concrete, however, rainwater runs off these surfaces and goes to a storm drain, which ultimately drains to Waller Creek and then to Town Lake. Do not put anything into a drain on campus, including cigarette butts. Put litter in the trash, so it doesn't end up in the drain. Call EHS at 471-3511 to report pollution (including oil, a strange color, or a sudden rise in volume during dry weather) in storm drains or the creek.

Animal Capture and Safety

UT's Animal Make Safe program safely and humanely remove animals from UT buildings, including bats, raccoons, opossums, snakes, etc. The 24-hour hotline is 471-BATS (471-2287).

Transportation

Buses

UT faculty and staff do not have to pay to ride Austin's extensive bus system, including Capital Metro buses and UT shuttles. Save parking fees; ride the bus instead! Bus and bike commuters can get a UT Share Pass, which provides discounted garage entry, for those occasions when they need to bring their cars.

Biking

Bicycling is a healthy and fun way to get work. There are more than 2,000 bikes on campus, and bike racks are widely available. If you have a RecSports pass, you can shower on campus at Gregory Gym or the RecSports Center. Visit <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/bicycle/> and <http://bicycleaustin.info/> for valuable information on bicycling around Austin, and go to <http://www.utexas.edu/parking/> to register your bike online with UT.

Carpooling

UT encourages carpooling (where someone drives a personal vehicle) and vanpooling (where you ride in a Capital Metro van). The system is flexible, so you can drive your own car on occasion and/or get a ride home in case of emergency. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/parking/>

Waste Disposal

Furniture

The University has an internal recycling program for reusable items, such as furniture. Just call the Surplus Properties office at 471-7889 to arrange for pick-up of unwanted UT-owned items. They will take the items to a warehouse at Pickle Research Campus. This warehouse is also a good place to find extra desks, bookshelves, etc.; call for their hours.

Batteries

Ni-Cad, lead acid, and rechargeable batteries are recycled. Regular alkaline batteries are not. Please use rechargeable batteries; they will recharge for more than 500 uses, thus saving your office a lot of money. That's also 499 less batteries going to the landfill! In order to have batteries recycled, please call EHS at 471-3511.

Light Bulbs

Fluorescent light bulbs and fixtures are hazardous waste. They must be disposed of through the EHS office if they are silver tipped! Green tipped fluorescent bulbs may be thrown in the trash. Call 475-9738 to request bulb boxes or arrange for bulb disposal.

Electronics

Electronic equipment is sold for reuse or recycling through the Surplus Office at Pickle Research Campus. The metal content of electronic equipment is very valuable, so don't throw it away! Call 471-7889 to have your electronic equipment (even outdated or broken equipment) picked up.

Help Reduce Litter

Reducing litter keeps the campus clean and helps prevent water pollution. The Adopt an Acre program allows groups of UT students or staff to adopt an area of campus and clean it every other week. There are also several on-campus cleanups; the Waller Creek Cleanup occurs in November and April, and Beautiful U Day takes place in the fall of every year. For more information, visit <http://www.UTenvironment.org/litter/>

Unwanted Goods

Every May the Campus Environmental Center collects unwanted items from the homes of students, staff, and faculty. These items are stored over the summer and resold in a campus-wide garage sale in August, when students return. This program reduces waste, allows students and staff to get cheap goods, and raises money for campus environmental programs. For more information, visit <http://www.TrashtoTreasureUT.com>

Buy Green

Recycled Products

UT uses more than 100 tons of paper and cardboard each month. That is equivalent to 2,400 40-foot trees! Order recycled content paper for your office. Recycled paper is of equal quality and cost to non-recycled paper nowadays, so there is no excuse not to use it! Look for the green recycling symbol in the Office Depot catalog for a variety of green office products you can buy.

Reuse Paper

Use double-sided printing for presentations, meetings and handouts. You'll save half the paper you normally use! Also, reuse paper that is only printed on one side; you can use it to print out test pages, rental car info, driving directions, and any other documents that will live for only a few hours.

Reusable Dishware

An easy way to make an impact is to bring reusable dishes to use at work. Essential items are a water bottle, a coffee mug with a lid, and a plate and silverware. Encourage your coworkers to use reusable dishware as well.

Staff Sustainability Network

Our Mission: To help UT staff and faculty reduce the environmental and social impact of their offices.

Our Activities:

- Provide straightforward guides on how to recycle, save energy, and conserve the environment at UT.
- Publish a monthly e-newsletter with campus news and tips for a more sustainable office.
- Encourage staff to work together to address sustainability issues on campus and in Austin.

What is Sustainability?

Sustainability involves balancing environmental, social, and economic concerns when you make decisions. It does not proscribe specific outcomes; what is important is trying to find a solution that protects the environment and human health, promotes social justice, and saves money or is low-cost.

Get the Staff Sustainability Network Monthly E-Newsletter

All UT staff and faculty are invited to sign up for our monthly e-newsletter, which covers environmental programs you can implement in your office. To sign up, visit:

<http://www.UTenvironment.org/staff/>