



Working together for smart, clean energy

REDUCING YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT A CITIZEN'S GUIDE

- **STEP 1 – Measure Your Carbon Footprint – Use RVCCC Carbon Footprint Calculator (on our web site at www.rvccc.org/footprint.html)**
- **STEP 2 – Set a goal to reduce your Carbon Footprint By at least 2% each year**
- **STEP 3 – Take actions from suggestions in this guide**
- **STEP 4 – Monitor your progress!**

QUICK FIXES – LOW- or NO-COST STEPS YOU CAN TAKE NOW:

Home Utilities (Electricity, Gas, Heating Oil, Propane):

- Always turn off anything and everything that is not in use.
- Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent lights (CFL); lower costs for lighting up to 75%.
- Lower your hot water heater to 120 degrees, and drain any sediment.
- Set your thermostat to 78 or warmer for cooling, 68 or cooler for heating.
- Hang your clothes to dry outside (you'll love the smell), or indoors on inexpensive drying racks.
- Check for air leaks around doors, windows, vents and other openings; caulk, weatherstrip as needed.
- Use microwave rather than range or oven for reheating food.
- Avoid using coffee makers that have a continuous "ON" heating element, or turn them off after serving.
- Cold water wash is suitable for nearly every laundry need.
- Run dishwasher only when full; use low setting (light wash, water miser); avoid using heated dry cycle.
- Put electronics (computer gear, entertainment center) on switchable power strips and turn the strips off when not in use, so that they don't use energy while in "standby".
- Turn off your computer when not in use; use "power management" settings to turn off monitor and hard drive after brief period of inactivity. Many computers can be set to "hibernate" after inactivity, and recovery from hibernation is much faster than startup.

Transportation:

- Reduce your vehicle miles traveled by:
 - Avoiding unnecessary trips.
 - Combining errands.
 - Walking, riding a bicycle.
- Compare your actual gas mileage to your vehicle's rated mileage; if it's lower, try these steps to improve:
 - Modify your driving habits; avoid rapid acceleration and hard stops; decelerate as you approach possible stops; moderate your speed on the open road – most cars are most efficient at 55mph.
 - Make sure your tires are properly inflated and that your car is getting scheduled maintenance.
 - If you're still getting sub-par mileage, ask your mechanic to check for problems.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle (the 3 R's):

- RECYCLE everything that can be recycled in your community, including both curbside and drop-off service; it uses so much less energy to reprocess recycled materials than make new from raw materials.
- REDUCE your use of water; this reduces the energy used to supply your water and to treat wastewater.
- REUSE cloth bags when you shop. When asked, "Paper or plastic," reply, "Neither, thanks!"
- REDUCE your waste by choosing products wisely; consider the bulk and recyclability of the packaging (e.g. Choose aluminum cans over colored glass bottles, which can't be recycled in many areas).
- Buy local products when possible, REDUCING the energy used to transport them to your store.
- Choose only REUSABLE vessels for your drinking water (not disposable water bottles).

DO EVEN MORE TO REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT:

Home Utilities (Electricity, Gas, Heating Oil, Propane):

- Seek special CFL's for recessed fixtures, decorative applications (globes, candelabra) dimmers (or replace dimmers with standard switches), three-way lamps, ceiling fans.
- If you have an older hot water heater, and it is warm to the touch, install an insulator jacket.
- Install blinds on south facing windows to provide passive solar heating in winter.
- Low-flow shower heads will reduce your hot water expense and also your water use.
- Install a programmable thermostat for your heating/cooling system so that it runs less while you are away or asleep.
- A pressure cooker will reduce cooking time and energy use by 2/3 on stews, beans, pot roast, etc.
- Install and use ceiling fans or portable fans for cooling.
- If your outdoor A/C unit is in the sun, you will enhance it's efficiency by providing shade.
- Plant native shade trees. While you won't see the result for awhile, deciduous trees will provide cooling shade in the summer and let the sun shine through in the winter. Trees also act as a carbon sink.
- MAJOR PROJECTS, INVESTMENTS
 - Start replacing your old, inefficient appliances. Choose the most efficient (Energy Star) models to replace refrigerator, air conditioner, furnace, dishwasher, washing machines, and other appliances.
 - Have a professional evaluation of your home's energy efficiency; this can include a sophisticated air leak test, testing your duct work, and evaluation of your insulation.
 - Go tankless (on-demand) to replace your hot water heater, or invest in roof-mounted passive solar hot water system
 - Replace single-pane windows with double- or triple-pane versions.
 - Consider whether your house is right for a net-metering solar panel installation, which can reduce or even eliminate your use of fossil fuel generated electricity.

Transportation:

- If you commute a considerable distance to work, contact RIDE SOLUTIONS (www.ridesolutions.org or 866-424-3334) to explore car pooling opportunities.
- Analyze the public transportation system to see how you could use it to reduce your driving.
- Determine if your employer allows telecommuting; if so, you may avoid driving to work some of the time.
- Invest in a fuel efficient vehicle, such as a gas-electric hybrid. Mid-sized sedans can get up to 50 mpg, nearly double today's average.
- Long commute? Don't wait for gas prices to go through the roof; take the plunge and relocate to housing closer to where you work.

Get even more serious about the "3 R's":

- Take a hard look at your consumption habits and try to find ways you can tread more lightly by REDUCING your demands.
- Promote REUSING unneeded articles by donating them to charity or giving them away (check out your local FREecycle group).
- If you have old toilets with large tanks, they can be replaced at moderate cost, and you will REDUCE water use by about half.
- REDUCE your water consumption by installing a rain capture system. This can be as simple as a rain barrel to water your garden or as complex as professionally installed system.
- REDUCE or eliminate meat in your diet. The energy and land resources to raise and process animals for human consumption is significantly greater than vegetable, fruit and grain products.

CAN YOU THINK OF MORE ENERGY SAVING IDEAS?

Send your suggestions to RVCCC@COMCAST.NET

We'll include the best tips in future editions of this guide!

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