

AN EFFICIENT OFFICE:

THE GEIGER GROUP, DEPT OF CHEMISTRY, NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY TECH K161

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Introduction

Reducing energy use – and the climate change caused by our carbon emissions – isn't hard. It just requires us to develop some good habits. Here are a few things the Department of Chemistry's Geiger Group can do:

1. Turn 'Em Off

Asleep isn't good enough, and screen savers do nothing to save energy.

- 16 tube fluorescent lights, if left on, will result in 2000 lb carbon/year.
- 5 desktop computers, if left asleep, will result in 200 lb carbon/year.
- 2 laptop computers, if left on, will result in 300 lb carbon/year.
- 1 laser printer, if left on standby mode, will result in 100 lb carbon/year.

These emissions are equivalent to driving from Evanston, Illinois, to Bogotá, Columbia, and back (assuming they completed the Transamerican Highway).

Most office equipment continues to use energy even when shut off. Attach items to a power strip then turn the power strip off when you're not using anything.

2. Clean Your Coils

A refrigerator uses enough energy to result in 500 lb of yearly carbon emissions. K161 has three. Cleaning the coils in back twice a year, with a vacuum or brush, will improve their efficiency by 30%.

3. Save Paper

Making one ounce of paper takes as much energy as leaving a light on for nine hours. Rather than creating a paperless society, the advent of computers has seen an increase in the use of paper. Before you print, ask yourself, do I really need a printout? Print on the back of used paper or use those sheets as scrap paper.

4. Be Passive, Aggressively

Use the window shades to take advantage of passive light and heat. Open the shades for light, then turn off the electric lights if they're not needed. Also, open the shades for heat in winter, but close them in summer to lighten the cooling load. Do the reverse at night.

5. Learn more and spread the word.

This is a project of the Zero Emissions Road Trip. Visit <http://zeroemissionsroadtrip.com> for more ways to save energy. Then let your colleagues and friends know how they can save energy in their own offices and their own homes.

