

Ways to reduce your carbon footprint

Individuals and Businesses – however big or small – can really influence the way they operate in order to cut their carbon footprint and make an impact. There are a multitude of changes that can be made to the way a business operates in order to do this. We have compiled a top 10 checklist that can aid this process to reduce the carbon footprint for both individuals and businesses.

1. Switch to renewable energy backed by REGO certificates

REGOs – or Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin – assures that the origin of the energy supplied to you is 100% renewably sourced. Using the GHG Protocol market-based calculation method to work out your carbon footprint focuses on the fuel mix of your electricity supplies. Consequently, if you use renewable energy your emissions for electricity will be zero!

2. Reduce your emissions from air travel

Increasingly, companies are opting to travel less for business by using popular software programmes such as Zoom and Skype. Consider travelling by train domestically to reduce emissions from air travel. However, if air travel needs to take place, investigate the travel class that is being used. Using the 2019 UK Defra Carbon Factors for a long haul flight, the emissions per passenger km for first class travel are 0.60kg CO₂e, for business class 0.43kg CO₂e and for economy 0.15kg CO₂e. This is calculated by the amount of space taken up per seat on the planet.

This means a one-way flight from London Heathrow to New York JFK airport will have a carbon footprint per person of 3684kg CO₂e for first class, 2671kg CO₂e for business class and 921kg CO₂e for economy class. For those undertaking several trips per year, a switch from business to economy class will mean a reduction in comfort but also a significant difference in the associated emissions.

3. Reduce your emissions from road travel

If you have your own fleet install a telematics system (GPS tracking) to allow the collection of data that can help analyse your fleet's usage and make your fleet more efficient. Analysis of telematics data could inform criteria for future purchase/leasing decisions.

Choosing more fuel efficient or alternatively fuelled vehicles such as alternative fuel or electric vehicles. Government grants are available to subsidise the cost of new low-emissions vehicles. As with the cost of EVs the government also offers subsidies to those installing charge points at home.

It will be worthwhile engaging The Energy Saving Trust (EST) who can carry out several different reviews to help you make your fleet greener and more efficient. EST's Green Fleet Reviews are usually available at no cost for most private and public sector organisations in England as they are paid for by the UK Government to promote energy efficiency goals. Green Fleet Reviews identify opportunities to reduce emissions, fuel costs and expenditure.

- To apply for a Green Fleet Review email fleetadvice@est.org.uk
- EST also offer a series of best practice guides.
- And a 'Fleet Healthcheck' tool which uses the answers to a five minute questionnaire to give some indicative answers of the type that a full review would provide.

Training drivers in ecodriving techniques can save fuel and reduce emissions. In summary this consists of teaching drivers how to drive with more anticipation of road conditions and more consideration of fuel economy.

4. Increase the efficiency of your office lighting

Changing lighting across a building to more energy efficient options such as LED can make a big difference and is a quick win with long lasting effects. Where possible ensure that natural light is used when adequate. Many offices are artificially lit unnecessarily. Natural light saves energy and has been found to improve sleep and avoid health risks associated with unnatural lighting, such as an elevated stress response.

Solar shading and transparent film can be used to help, by minimising glare and excessive heat. There is also an array of technology available, such as motion sensors which will automatically ensure lights are switched off if rooms are not in use. Dimmable lights are another method to ensure lights aren't at their brightest maximum when not required. This should also help reduce electricity costs.

5. Reduce energy usage in your data centre and Comms room

- Set cooling systems to a higher temperature to save energy and increase cooling capacity

Often data centres are set around 19°C resulting in unnecessary energy usage. Data centres can save 8% to 9% in energy costs for every 1°C increase in server inlet temperature. 23°C is the optimum temperature for many data centres to save energy without risking overheating.

- Set up hot and cool aisles

Typically, only 40% of the electricity consumed in a data centre is used by IT equipment. A staggering 60% is consumed by the server room infrastructure: air conditioning, lighting, UPS systems, etc. Reorganising your aisles into either hot or cold air containment systems could save you 20% to 40% in annual cooling system energy.

- Install plastic curtains

The most simple and cost-effective hot air containment system found is that used by Google and involves placing metal-end caps on rows and vinyl plastic curtains, such as those used in meat lockers, which limit air of different temperatures from mixing, whilst maintaining ease of access and flexible rack layouts.

6. Optimise your heating and cooling systems

Implement temperature controls, ensuring heating and air conditioning is timed correctly and according to outside air temperatures. This can minimise over heating or cooling. Ensuring that temperature is minimal during the night is important. Lots of energy can be wasted if heating and cooling systems are competing, this can be avoided by installing a Building Management system.

Ensure staff are trained on local heating and cooling units to avoid dramatic swings in temperature or take away ability to manually adjust the thermostat. Train or take away locally controlled thermostats and have them centrally controlled. Make sure your boiler is regularly serviced to ensure it is operating as efficiently as possible. In addition, regularly clean fins on heating and cooling appliances.

Consider installing window film, that allows light in but reflects the heat back out during the summer. This gives you the benefit of natural light without causing increased need for air conditioning. This film can be reversed in winter so that heat is reflected into room.

7. Reduce, reuse, recycle

Thinking about sustainable procurement can act as an exercise to engage employees with thinking of ways they can reduce consumption of items such as water, paper, food and drink, laptops, phones and packaging. Manufacture and transport of all these items has an associated carbon footprint.

Purchasing recycled paper or refurbished phones and IT equipment is an easy way to reduce your businesses carbon footprint. Buying recycled paper instead of primary production reduces carbon emissions as stipulated by the GHG Protocol. If your business has a large supply chain, then it is particularly important to ensure that sustainability is fed right through.

8. Minimise emissions from food and food waste

Food takes a significant amount of energy to produce and transport it. Therefore, food waste can be source of carbon, particularly if your business has a canteen serving fresh food daily. Check with your waste contractor if food waste collection is possible.

Ensure that kitchen staff are all trained and aware of the issue, and provide proper facilities, in kitchens, dining rooms and canteens for employees to dispose of any food waste they may have. Additionally, it is worth looking into food waste apps like Olio, for example.

If your business has a canteen or café it is worth making sure you have vegan and vegetarian options available to encourage staff to choose to eat food with fewer associated carbon emissions. 18% of global emissions are associated with livestock agriculture (FAO Report). Providing employees with good vegan and vegetarian food can help to reduce your businesses carbon footprint.

9. Minimise single use plastic

By introducing sustainable procurement policies as suggested above, your plastic waste will be reduced. The next step to reduce plastic is to look at removing all single use plastic items you're your business model.

10. Print as minimally as possible

Many offices consume vast amounts of paper. Take action to cut down paper usage, especially by reducing printing, and digitising (e.g. online contract signings, avoiding printing emails, presentations and annotating on screen instead). If printing is required, ensure double sided printing is set as a default. Having 'follow me' printing services across office printers can also help cut down any accidental or unnecessary printing as options can be altered at the time of printing.

If you would like to view the Webinar on **'Ways to reduce your Carbon Footprint'** this is being delivered live on Tuesday 24th August at 12pm, join us on the day or register now by clicking on the link below to ensure your place:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6443785068572379147>

If you are unable to join the webinar live, a recording of the session can be accessed using the same link above after the webinar has taken place.

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