

how to operate as an environmentally aware organization and reduce or eliminate your carbon footprint



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## Step 1: Assemble a taskforce to lead your environmental initiative

Assemble a volunteer taskforce of people to head your environmental efforts. You probably won't have to look far to find five or six team members who possess knowledge on various environmental subjects and who will be passionate about leading the charge within your organization.

## Step 2: Develop a Mission Statement

Once your environmental team is assembled, the next step is to develop a Mission Statement defining what you intend to accomplish. For instance, the Mission Statement for the Guidance Green team reads:

**“To operate as an environmentally aware carbon-neutral company by 2009.”**

Our general outline for accomplishing our Mission was laid out as follows:

- Phase I:** To reuse and recycle all material waste produced through Guidance business activity within the first Quarter of 2007
- Phase II:** To reduce all energy waste produced through Guidance business activity within the second Quarter of 2007
- Phase III:** To expand the Guidance Green mission into the community through the participation / creation of eco-friendly events.

# Declaration

March 13, 2007

## The unanimous Declaration of Guidance Solutions, Inc.

When in the course of daily business activity, it becomes necessary to consider the negative impact we make on the Earth, a respect for our environment requires that we declare the ways and means in which to preserve this planet.

1. We will reuse, reduce, and recycle material waste produced by Guidance business activities.
  - a) Recycling bins shall be placed in accessible, high traffic areas and provide clear information about what can be recycled.
  - b) Recycle everything we can. Almost everything can be recycled, even hazardous materials and medicines.
  - c) Reusable plates, silverware and glasses shall be provided for all meals eaten at the office. Filtered drinking water shall be provided to reduce bottled water waste.
  
2. We will reduce all energy waste produced by Guidance business activities.
  - a) Lights shall be turned off when leaving any room and natural light shall be utilized whenever possible.
  - b) Energy efficient bulbs shall replace old bulbs.
  - c) Screen savers do not save energy. All computers and monitors shall be turned off or hibernated when not in use.
  - d) Print smarter by using both sides or the back sides of old documents. Color printing shall be avoided unless absolutely necessary.
  - e) The company's purchasing policy shall reinforce the use of recycled office supplies.
  - f) Alternative modes of transportation and commuting such as riding the bus, carpooling, walking and biking shall be encouraged and incentivized.
  
3. We will expand the Guidance Green mission into the community through the participation and creation of eco-friendly events.
  - a) Working relationships shall be forged with green partners and customers.
  - b) The company shall sponsor a minimum of two green community events per year.

We, therefore, the Guidance staff, solemnly publish and declare, that this company shall operate as an environmentally aware carbon-neutral company. In support of this declaration, we mutually pledge to each other our commitment, our passion, and our action.

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## Step 3: Evaluate your consumption of non-renewable resources and develop strategies for reducing and/or eliminating consumption where possible

Non-renewable resources are natural resource that exists in a finite quantity and cannot be remade, recycled, or re-grown as quickly as they are consumed. These include metals, minerals, water, trees, and fossil fuels. If you stop to consider, you'll realize nearly everything you use in the course of your business activities is made with one or more of these non-renewable resources.

Strategies for reducing and/or eliminating consumption could include:

### Energy:

- Hibernate / turn off all computers and peripherals when not in use.
- Adopt the use of energy-efficient compact fluorescent light bulbs.
- Install lighting sensors to turn lights out in rooms not in use.
- Optimize A/C usage by setting air condition on timers to reduce consumption in off hours.

### Paper:

- Use only recycled paper.
- Print in double-sided / duplex mode whenever possible.
- Encourage paperless meetings.
- Distribute interoffice memos electronically rather than in hard copy.
- Eliminate the use of paper plates in your employee lunch area.

### Plastic:

- Discourage the use of or eliminate the use of plastic bottled beverages.
- Eliminate the use of plastic utensils and plates your employee lunch area.

### CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions:

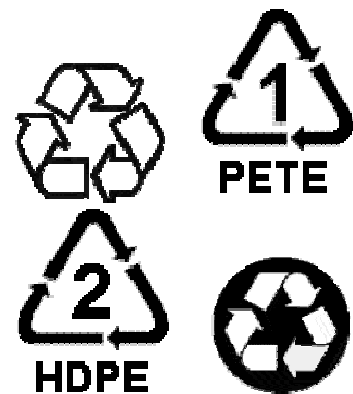
- Encourage employees to use alternative modes of transportation – such as bus, train, bike, or walking – when possible.
- Encourage ridesharing by designating premium parking spaces nearer the entrance for those who carpool.



## Step 4: Recycle, recycle, recycle!!!

You'd be surprised how many different kinds of materials can be recycled. In addition to paper, plastic, and aluminum, you can also recycle:

- Batteries
- Ink and toner cartridges
- Computer equipment
- Cell phones
- Light bulbs
- Cleaning products
- Styrofoam



Place recycling bins in accessible, high traffic areas and provide clear information about what can be recycled.

Once you've established a way to collect your recyclable materials, make sure your cleaning staff understands how to handle your recyclable waste. It doesn't do any good to separate your recyclables if they aren't disposed of properly. You should also determine where your city or county provides a recycling center that can handle special recyclables like computers, cell phones, batteries and such and set up a monthly or bi-monthly recycling day. You can even open it up to your employees to bring recyclable items from home and make your impact even greater.



## Step 5: Offset your remaining carbon footprint

Your “carbon footprint” is the measurement of the amount of carbon dioxide you release into the atmosphere through your activities. Even conscientious companies with conservation policies in place will still produce carbon emissions. You can determine the volume of carbon dioxide emissions your organization produces through the following activities:

➤ **Electricity usage**

Your electric bill will indicate how many kilowatt hours of electricity you are consuming each month. Use a month that you feel is representative of your average usage and multiply by twelve months to determine your total for the year, or if you’d like to be precise, you can add up the actual kilowatt hours from each monthly invoice to determine your actual total.

➤ **Employee commuting**

You’ll need some cooperation from your workforce for this step of the process. What you’re trying to determine is how many miles your employees are driving to and from your office, as well as to and from business meetings. The easiest way to approach this is to ask your employees to provide you with the make, model and year of the vehicle they drive, and ask them to determine the number of miles they commute roundtrip to the office by using MapQuest or Yahoo maps. Your accounting office should be able to tally up mileage to and from business meetings by looking at employee expense reports if your company reimburses for mileage. You’ll ultimately want to determine the total mileage for the year. The information should look something like this:



**Employee 1**

**2004 Honda Accord**

Distance from office:	12 miles
Roundtrip commute:	24 miles
Weekly mileage:	120 miles
Yearly mileage (x50 wks):	6,000 miles
Business meetings:	431 miles
<b>Total for Employee 1:</b>	<b><u>6,431 miles</u></b>



**Employee 2**

**1998 Ford Explorer**

Distance from office:	17.5 miles
Roundtrip commute:	35 miles
Weekly mileage:	175 miles
Yearly mileage (x50 wks):	8,750 miles
Business meetings:	122 miles
<b>Total for Employee 2:</b>	<b><u>8,872 miles</u></b>

And so on and so forth.

➤ **Employee air travel**

Look to your accounting office to gather information on employee air travel. Your ultimate goal is to create a list of the flights using airport codes. The list should look something like this:

LAX to MSP	Round Trip
EWR to IAD	Round Trip
SFO to PHL	One Way
PHL to MIA	One Way
MIA to SFO	One Way
SEA to DFW	Round Trip

And so on and so forth.

➤ **Natural gas usage**

If your business / office utilizes natural gas, you can determine your usage by looking at your monthly invoices, the same as you did for your electric usage.

After you've gathered all of the information in this section, you'll be ready to calculate your carbon footprint. The Guidance team worked with Green Mountain Energy (<http://www.greenmountainenergy.com>) to calculate our carbon footprint; however you can also do this yourself using an online Carbon Calculator. Green Mountain Energy has an online Calculator at <http://www.begreennow.com>. The Calculator is easy to use and will walk you through the steps to input your information. You'll be asked to provide the total kilowatt hours of electricity you use, automobile miles driven for each vehicle, number of airline trips, and amount of natural gas consumed. Once you've input all of your data, the Calculator will tell you how many metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> you are emitting annually.





Once you know how many metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> your organization is producing annually, you can look at ways to offset these emissions so that you become, in effect, carbon neutral. Two of the ways you can offset your carbon emission are:

- Purchasing Renewable Energy Credits (RECs), units of renewable energy made from wind or biomass, solar power, water power, biofuels, or geothermal energy.
- Help fund a reforestation project.

While there are a growing number of green energy solutions companies, the Guidance team partnered with Green Mountain Energy to help us offset our carbon footprint. Through Green Mountain's subsidiary e-Mission Solutions, we were able to purchase Renewable Energy Credits to offset our annual carbon emissions.

## **Step 6: Look beyond your immediate workplace to find ways to take your environmental commitment into the community**

Once you've done everything you can inside of your organization to conserve energy and reduce your impact on the environment, it's time to look outside of your organization and get involved in community efforts. Within most communities there are any numbers of opportunities to improve the environment. Here in California there are coastal cleanup initiatives and tree plantings; efforts to restore wildlife habitats; groups involved in developing sustainable housing; recycling initiatives; and more. Within your organization decide on two or three initiatives and get involved.

## **Step 7: Encourage your vendors and business partners to adopt similar environmental policies and practices**

If you've decided to evaluate your impact on the environment, it's likely you agree with the environmental and climate experts who assert that now is a critical time in earth's history. The challenges to reduce waste, improve air quality, eliminate greenhouse gas emissions, and find renewable sources of energy require everyone's participation. Now that you've taken steps within your organization and gotten involved in community efforts, encourage your vendors and business partners to do the same.



## Green Resources: Information and resources to help you and your organization be as “green” as you can be

Who	What	Web link
<b>Be Green</b>	Carbon Calculator	<a href="http://www.begreennow.com/calculator">http://www.begreennow.com/calculator</a>
<b>Earth 911</b>	Environmental and recycling info	<a href="http://www.earth911.org">http://www.earth911.org</a>
<b>EcoGeek</b>	Blog highlighting green technology	<a href="http://www.ecogeek.org">http://www.ecogeek.org</a>
<b>Environmental Literacy Council</b>	Info on climate change and the environment	<a href="http://www.enviroliteracy.org">http://www.enviroliteracy.org</a>
<b>Green Mountain Energy</b>	Renewable Energy Credits	<a href="http://www.greenmountainenergy.com">http://www.greenmountainenergy.com</a>
<b>Green Options</b>	Green information and resources	<a href="http://greenoptions.com">http://greenoptions.com</a>
<b>Guidance Green Team</b>	Guidance Green’s Blog	<a href="http://www.guidancegreen.blogspot.com">http://www.guidancegreen.blogspot.com</a>
<b>Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change</b>	Info on climate change and the environment	<a href="http://www.ipcc.ch">http://www.ipcc.ch</a>
<b>Keep America Beautiful</b>	Environmental and recycling info	<a href="http://www.kab.org">http://www.kab.org</a>
<b>Natural Resources Defense Council</b>	Environmental info and resources	<a href="http://www.nrdc.org">http://www.nrdc.org</a>
<b>Pew Center for Climate Change</b>	Info and resources for businesses relating to conservation and the environment	<a href="http://www.pewclimate.org">http://www.pewclimate.org</a>
<b>Stopglobalwarming.org</b>	Climate change and global warming info	<a href="http://www.stopglobalwarming.org">http://www.stopglobalwarming.org</a>
<b>United Nations Environment Programme</b>	Info on climate change and the environment	<a href="http://www.unep.org">http://www.unep.org</a>
<b>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency</b>	Info on climate change and the environment	<a href="http://www.epa.gov/climatechange">http://www.epa.gov/climatechange</a>
<b>World Health Organization</b>	Info on climate change and the environment	<a href="http://www.who.int/globalchange/en">http://www.who.int/globalchange/en</a>



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