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Going ... Going ... Gone Green

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Did you know that law firms' average paper output is around 100,000 sheets per year? This number, I am told, is second only to the publishing industry. Let's look at some easy efforts to start conserving that we started at our firm with much success.

- ☐ Print on both sides.
- ☐ Print on paper made from Koala food (Eucalyptus trees).
- ☐ Deliver client copies on CD.
- ☐ Post key documents on the firm intranet.
- ☐ Participate in the EPA's Green Power Partnership Program by purchasing energy from renewable sources to cover at least a portion of electricity usage. Another program is the EPA's Energy Star program which encourages law offices to reduce energy by at least 10%.
- ☐ Turn off equipment when it's not being used. This can reduce the energy used by 25%; turning off the computers at the end of the day can save an additional 50%. Look into implementing power management software which will hibernate your PC's after being idle for one hour (after 5 pm) and throughout the weekend.
- ☐ Encourage communications by email, and read email messages onscreen

to determine whether it is necessary to print them. If it's not, don't! Put a green message on your email signature line which asks that the recipient not print if not necessary.

- ☐ Reduce fax-related paper waste by using a fax-modem and by using a fax cover sheet only when necessary. Fax-modems allow documents to be sent directly from a computer, without requiring a printed hard copy.
- ☐ Do not leave taps dripping; always close them tightly after use. (One drop wasted per second wastes 10,000 litres per year.)
- ☐ Install displacement toilet dams in toilet reservoirs. Placing one or two plastic containers filled with stones (not bricks) in the toilet's reservoir will displace about four litres of water per flush- a huge reduction of water use over the course of a year.
- ☐ Find a supply of paper with maximum available recycled content.
- ☐ Choose suppliers who take back packaging for reuse.
- ☐ Post signs around the office which say, "Reduce-Reuse-Recycle," "Help Us Tackle Climate Change" or "Join a Green Team Today."

☐ Instigate an ongoing search for "greener" products and services in the community. The further your supplies or services providers have to travel, the more energy will be used to get them to you.

☐ Before deciding whether you need to purchase new office furniture, see if your existing office furniture can be refurbished. It's less expensive than buying new and better for the environment.

☐ More tips are available on these Web sites:

- Consumer Guide: www.thedailygreen.com
- Green Your Computer: <http://epeat.net/green-your-housekeeping>
- Green Your Housekeeping: www.zenhomecleaning.com
- National Geographic sponsor: www.thegreenguide.com
- News, Blogs & Tools for Greener Living: www.yahooogreen.com
- Helping You Make Green Choices: www.greenoptions.com
- On-line Magazine: www.lighterfootstep.com
- Discovery Communications (sustainable lifestyle info): www.treehugger.com

Connie Fiore is a member of the New York City Chapter and the Newsletter Committee.