



# A More Sustainable Campus: How Individuals Can Take Positive Action

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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Ohio State aims to become a worldwide leader in sustainability. This includes striving toward defined goals such as carbon neutrality by 2050 and a 25% increase in energy efficiency of university buildings by 2025. While investment is necessary to design, build and maintain the university's buildings and campus grounds in a manner that helps achieve the university's sustainability goals, building and campus user behaviors are a key determinant of the university's sustainability performance.

Simply said, the university cannot achieve its operational sustainability goals without the participation of the entire campus community, particularly with regard to individual decisions made in the university's classrooms, offices, laboratories and medical spaces.

This document outlines the responsibilities for all campus building occupants and owners to ensure Ohio State's buildings remain in proper working order and the university achieves important sustainability objectives.

Similarly, campus user behavior considerably impacts the university's ability to achieve its sustainability aspirations even when that behavior occurs outside of a building on campus grounds. To that end, this document outlines user responsibilities that aim to directly support and improve university sustainability outcomes.

## Building User Actions

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### FIX IT FIRST

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Through Facilities Operations and Development (FOD), Ohio State provides a response program for all reported building issues. If you are aware of items such as inoperable lighting, heating/cooling or water leaks (including dripping faucets), report the location and any details you can provide to [service2facilities@osu.edu](mailto:service2facilities@osu.edu) or, particularly for urgent matters, dial 2-HELP (614-292-4357).

FOD will follow up on the report, including responding to you with the outcome.

### OBSERVE TO CONSERVE

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**Electronic Equipment:** Leaving appliances in standby mode wastes significant amounts of energy. Turn off appliances, such as computers, printers, stereo equipment, televisions, coffee makers, DVD players and window air conditioners, when not in use, but remain in compliance with Office of Chief Information Officer (OCIO) guidance. Use a power strip/surge protector, or fully unplug the devices, so you can completely power down at the end of each day or when leaving the space for a significant amount of time. If available, use the “eco” mode on a device or appliance, particularly refrigerators. When possible, purchase [EPEAT certified](#) electronic equipment, which ensures energy efficiency and other sustainability criteria.

**Lighting:** Turn off lights when not in use, especially when exiting a space for an extended period of time. Where available, make use of as much daylight as possible.

**Thermostat Control:** In building locations where you have the ability to control the room temperature, try not to overheat or overcool the space. If you do not have the ability to control the room temperature, the university requests that you refrain from using personal heaters or fans and from opening windows. Instead, please contact [service2facilities@osu.edu](mailto:service2facilities@osu.edu) to determine if a better solution can be implemented to improve the comfort of the space. If it is an urgent matter, dial 2-HELP (614-292-4357)

**Water:** Daily water use may be more relevant to students and others living in university buildings. For this community, it is important to be conscious of your water usage. Taking shorter showers, using cold water when washing clothes, making sure the dish washer is full before running, and turning water off when brushing teeth, shaving or shampooing are all effective methods to conserve water use as an individual and throughout a whole building. Others on campus should use efficient water practices in campus labs and office facilities such as kitchen units.

**Printing:** Ohio State offers numerous amenities to avoid printing materials, including web-enabled screens in class and meeting rooms. However, when printing is necessary, printing with Ohio State’s [“Follow Me Printing”](#) program increases convenience, sustainability, and security. This program reduces printing unneeded materials by mistake, and makes energy use more efficient by alleviating the need for numerous smaller, slower printers throughout campus. Regardless of where you print, remember to set

the printing defaults to double-sided and black and white to avoid accidental one-sided or color printing, if possible.

## REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

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Ohio State strives to achieve “[zero waste](#)” on its campuses, meaning that at least 90% of the waste generated on campus is either recycled or composted. Ohio State has been a leader in working toward this ambitious goal, and both the university and the campus community play important roles in reducing the amount of waste we send to the landfill.

**Reduce:** Individuals have considerable control over how much landfill waste is generated on campus. Products with more packaging, or that cannot be recycled at the end of their use, increase the amount of waste that the university pays to dispose of at the landfill. Reduce overall product purchases and ensure the products that are purchased can be recycled to help advance the university’s zero waste goal.

**Reuse:** Ohio State’s onsite [Surplus Department](#) facilitates the reuse of assets that are retired or reach the end of their normal useful life. Assets that are transferred to the Surplus Department can be transferred to another Ohio State department, sold direct to the public, sold through online auctions or recycled.

In addition, Ohio State has built upon its partnership with Goodwill Columbus to accept personal and professional goods at key times during the academic year, particularly during Move Out Week. Additional outlets are available throughout the year, including [donation drop-off locations](#) near many of Ohio State’s campuses.

**Recycle:** Ohio State offers all-in-one recycling across its campuses; however, be mindful of what items are actually recyclable and only place those items in the recycling bins. Contamination, that is, placing items in the recycling bin that cannot be recycled, will lead to the whole bin being rejected from recycling even if most of the items in the bin can be recycled. To aid in this effort, review the [comprehensive list](#) of items that can be recycled and these [10 recycling tips](#) tailored for successful recycling at Ohio State. If a campus area lacks a recycling bin, please contact [service2facilities@osu.edu](mailto:service2facilities@osu.edu) or, particularly for urgent matters, dial 2-HELP (614-292-4357).

## Campus User Actions

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### TRANSPORTATION

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Ohio State University accommodates a variety of safe, efficient modes of transportation to and throughout its campuses, including walking, biking, skating, electric scooters, buses and passenger vehicles.

**Park Once:** For those commuting to campus in a personal vehicle, Ohio State encourages a “park once” strategy. This involves leaving your vehicle, once parked, in place for the duration of your stay on campus. Doing so reduces the amount of traffic congestion on campus as well as related vehicle emissions as you move between locations while on campus.

**Utilize CABS:** Ohio State offers a [free bus shuttle](#) service across its Columbus campus throughout the day and evening. Stops are conveniently located to efficiently move people from one area of campus to another and to support the Park Once strategy. For Wexner Medical Center employees, additional shuttles run between the Ackerman, Morehouse and main hospital campuses. Find the full CABS schedule on the official [Ohio State app](#).

**EV Charging:** While Ohio State provides a growing number of [electric vehicle charging stations](#) across its campuses, user demand at some locations is higher than others. Therefore, these electric charging station spaces are not intended to be reserved parking spaces for electric vehicles. Use them only for active electric charging while your vehicle is parked in the space. Cars parked in the designated electric charging spaces while not actively using the charging station are subject to enforcement fines.

**Anti-Idling:** As stated in the [University Fleet Policy](#), conserve fuel and reduce emissions by minimizing vehicle idling time to that which is necessary to accomplish work-related tasks.

**Check Parking Space Tracker:** On its website, CampusParc maintains a [real-time tracker](#) of available garage parking spaces on the Columbus campus. Check this resource before making your trip to campus to save time driving around campus looking for an available parking spot and to reduce related vehicle emissions. The [official Ohio State app](#) also features the Space Tracker.

### PURCHASING

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For campus users with purchasing authority, decisions over what products to bring onto campus have a high impact on the university’s waste stream.

**Eliminate Waste:** Reducing the amount of unnecessary product purchases protects the university’s budget and limits waste generation when the product meets the end of its useful life. In addition to reducing purchases, consider checking Ohio State’s onsite [Surplus Department](#) for your needs before purchasing new items.

**Switch to Sustainable:** There are often more sustainable options to traditional product purchases. Within the university's [eStores system](#), these products are designated with a green leaf. To reduce waste sent to the landfill, consider purchasing products that can be recycled or composted after use. Then, be sure to place the used item in the appropriate recycling or compost bin to avoid contamination of the whole bin.

**Energy Star/WaterSense Certified:** The U.S. Department of Energy and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reviews and certifies a wide variety of products within their [Energy Star](#) program. Similarly, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reviews and certifies different categories of products with its [WaterSense](#) program. These two highly regarded programs help consumers and institutions conserve energy and water use over the life of the products. If you are a campus purchaser, pay particular attention to products with these certifications, as their total cost of ownership is usually lower than traditional products, even if the initial purchase cost is slightly higher due to the lower energy and water costs to operate them.

## FURTHER ENGAGEMENT

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Ohio State provides numerous ways to further engage and participate in the university's sustainability initiatives, based on an individual's desire.

**Green Buckeye Certification:** Students, faculty and staff have a significant influence on sustainable performance of the university through everyday activities in their respective environment. The university created the [Green Buckeye Certification](#) (GBC) program to inform and encourage implementation of best practices to improve the sustainability performance of campus offices and laboratories.

Due to the resource intensity of the vast number of offices and more than 3,000 laboratories throughout the university, the GBC program includes resources on energy and water conservation education, recycling and waste reduction, energy efficiency, green purchasing, and health and wellness. By becoming Green Buckeye Certified, you will demonstrate leadership and commitment to Ohio State's sustainability goals.

**Enjoy the Outdoors:** Ohio State offers a variety of outdoor landscapes for recreation, reflection, and study. Greenspace is an important factor in maintaining social engagement and mental health. Enjoy and understand these spaces with appropriate care. For example, designated "urban meadow" areas are designed for improved environmental and management benefits, but do not have traditional aesthetic properties associated with more actively managed garden and lawn spaces.

**Sustainability Groups:** "Green teams" at Ohio State welcome participation, most notably in the Wexner Medical Center. Made up of sustainably minded individuals who come together to educate themselves about a topic and execute projects to improve aspects of campus sustainability. Similarly, there are currently over 80 student groups that conduct at least some sustainability related programming, with many of those groups focused solely on various aspects of sustainability. To sign up for the Wexner Medical Center Green Team, email [sustainability@osumc.edu](mailto:sustainability@osumc.edu). Learn more about [Student Life sustainability-related student organizations](#).

**Learn More:** Ohio State offers two electronic sustainability newsletters tailored to distinct campus audiences with updates on upcoming events and opportunities. Student Life produces the Students and Sustainability newsletter for undergraduates, and the Sustainability Institute sends its newsletter to faculty and interested staff members. The newsletters are generally issued bi-weekly during the autumn and spring semesters and monthly during summer semester. [Subscribe to the newsletters of interest to you.](#)

**Stay Connected:** Ohio State sustainability is active on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. For general sustainability content, follow @OhioStSustain. For more student-focused content, check out @greenbuckeyes. Also follow Office of Administration and Planning (@OhioStateAP on Twitter and Instagram) and Facilities Operations and Development (@OhioStateFOD on Twitter) for their news, including sustainability efforts.