

Green Living Guide – Off Campus Living

This is a set of green living guidelines for students, faculty, and staff when they are not living on campus. We hope you find it helpful as you make choices about day-to-day living. It is intended as suggestions, and there are many more things that you can do in addition to these.

Energy

- Lighting
 - Replace incandescent bulbs with CFL or LED light bulbs throughout your home living space.
- Passive solar heating/cooling.
 - Use drapes to help heat/cool residential rooms. Sunlight is our most efficient source of energy. Here's how it works:
 - In cold weather: open drapes and allow the sun to warm your room – even in winter; close drapes at night to keep warmth in.
 - In warm weather: close drapes (and shut your window) to keep hot sun out/cool air in; at night open up the windows and let the cool air in – use a fan to help draw in fresh cool air from outside.
- Heating/Cooling
 - Install a programmable thermostat, and then program it to maximize your energy savings.
 - Turn your thermostat down in the winter
 - Daytime/evening, when you are home: 68°F
 - Daytime/evening, when you are away: 53°F– 58°F
 - Nighttime: 53°F– 58°F
 - Turn your thermostat up in the summer (if you have A/C)
 - Daytime/evening, when you are home: 78°F
 - Nighttime: try opening your windows to get fresh air. If you have to keep the A/C on, keep the temperature no lower than 78°F
 - Clean your filters regularly to help your units function more efficiently
- Fans vs. A/C
 - Use window fans to cool your home. They blow a breeze around your living space, cooling you off, while allowing you to wear shorts/tank

- tops (etc) and not be too cold because of A/C! Fans use MUCH less electricity, and allow you to remember what season your are in.
 - Use window screens to keep the bugs out...
 - Consider installing an attic fan (if you live in a house with an attic) that will pull cool air in from outside and vent hot air to the outside.
- Appliances
 - Purchase Energy Star rated appliances.
 - Unplug appliances and cell phone chargers that are not used regularly (and then only plug them in when you need them; some continue to consume power even when turned off. This burns out the unit faster and heats up the space around it.
 - Plug all your regularly used appliances into a power strip. Turn that off at night so save electricity use called the “phantom load” of electricity use... power that is being used for no reason by appliances that are just waiting to be used. (examples of this include your TV and it’s remote (or any other device that has a remote), microwave, stereo, etc.)
 - Clean your filters regularly to help your units function more efficiently
- Computers
 - Turn off the screen saver function. These do not “save” your screen (that was for many generations of technology ago). They use more energy than sleep mode does.
 - Set your computers energy use settings to low. Check with IT for help with these settings.
 - Turn your computer off (i.e., shut it down) when you are not using it.
- Feng Shui – sort of
 - Keep furniture away from the heating and cooling vents to ensure that air is free to flow from the vent. This allows cooled or heated air to reach your living spaces more efficiently.
- Clothing
 - Dress appropriately to the season: wear sweaters in the winter; wear lightweight clothing in the warmer months.
- Laundry
 - Wash your clothes in cold water (in addition to not having to heat the water, it helps your clothes last longer and look better and reduces shrinkage)
 - Line dry your clothes. Invest in a few clothes drying racks and set aside space in a dry room.
 - Line dry your sheets. If you have a yard, consider installing a clothes line where you can hang your sheets to dry – they will smell wonderful and save you money by not using the dryer to dry them.

Food & Drink

- Purchase food at locally owned grocery stores.
- Eat lower on the food chain. Vegetarian meals require many fewer natural resources to produce than meat-based meals.
- Eat organic when you can.
 - Pesticides are held in high fat foods, so prioritize purchasing organic dairy products.
 - Pesticides are hard to get off of fruits with thin skins that you eat, so prioritize eating organic grapes and berries (they're hard to wash).
- Avoid drinks delivered to you in plastic.
 - Did you know that it takes over 2 liters of water to produce the bottle that is used for **every** plastic water bottle...and that doesn't include the water in the bottle!
 - Plastic water bottles are contributing millions of tons of waste to our waste stream annually in the US. Much of this waste ends up in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, polluting our ocean habitats for marine species (including the fish we eat).
 - Plastic water bottles leach chemicals into the water they hold, and that you drink from those bottles.
- BYOB – Bring your own Bottle. And make it a stainless steel bottle if you can...you don't want those plastic chemicals leaching into your water! Make sure everyone in your household has a reusable metal bottle so they don't have to take a disposable plastic bottle at sport events or when they're out biking or traveling around.
- Compost your food. Create a compost pile if you have a yard.
- Compost your yard waste if you live in a community that allows you to do so.
- Junk and Fast Food. Most fast food and food out of vending machines is low quality and highly processed. Make healthy choices with your money for your and your family's health.

Paper

- Reuse paper (turn it over!)
- Don't print multiple drafts of document – edit on your computer and print only the final.
- Consider signing up for electronic billing and banking to reduce the amount of paper you have to handle and eventually shred.

- Recycle your paper at home, including newspapers, mail, cereal boxes, cardboard, printer paper, your kids old school notebooks, etc.
- Reuse old magazines.
 - Many school art programs welcome old magazines that they can use for art projects.
 - Doctors offices and hair salons often welcome new magazines that they then redistribute.

Purchasing

- If you have a child who is going off to school, before they leave, consider what they'll need to bring. Here's our Green Purchasing Guide for College/Prep School (this is not an exhaustive list, just some suggestions):
 - Recycled paper, notebooks, etc.
 - Pens that are refillable
 - Pencils that don't have plastic shells... regular wooden pencils are more sustainable!
 - Bike – bring your bike from home. Or join Bikeshare for \$10/year and use one of ours!!
 - Fan – to cool your room off
 - Clothes drying rack
 - Environmentally sensitive laundry detergent
 - Organic cotton or bamboo sheets
 - Storage totes that can be used all year (instead of just for transporting to and from school)
 - Reusable bags for shopping (just say “No Thanks!” to plastic bags at **every** checkout you come to)
 - A set of take-out containers for when you go out to dinner and have leftovers.
 - Stainless steel water bottle and a bottle brush to clean it
 - One or two place settings of reusable utensils and plates/bowls to use in your room.
 - Insulated shades or drapes for your window to keep hot sun in or out (depending on time of year)
 - Sweaters, socks, blankets for cold weather.
 - CFL light bulbs
 - Energy-star appliances, if you must bring appliances. Make sure you collaborate with your roomie to make sure you're not duplicating.
 - Power strips – one for things you don't often use; one for things you use all the time.

Transportation

- Use public transportation when possible to get to your destinations (SEPTA buses run past campus frequently, and more generally, Philadelphia has buses, light rail, and Amtrak)
- If you live within a mile of campus, consider walking to work.
- If you live within a few miles of campus, consider biking instead of driving.
- Consider carpooling to work with co-workers who live near you.
- Sign up for the staff ride board at Ursinus.edu (search for ride board after you log in).

Water:

- A five-minute shower uses between 10-25 gallons of water (depending on the type of shower head); shorten your shower by one minute and save 5-10 gallons.
- Turn the water off when you brush your teeth or shave.
- If you live in an apartment, don't run your dishwasher until it is full.
- Throw your food waste in the compost instead of using the trash.
- Watch for leaky faucets, showers, or toilets and either fix it yourself or get a plumber in to help out. A leaky faucet can waste 200 gallons of water a month.
- Wash your clothes in a full load of laundry (not a load of just one or two items of clothing).

Get Involved:

- Get involved with the Ursinus Sustainability Committee. There are four subcommittees that all have open membership:
 - Tree Care Subcommittee
 - Sustainable Facilities Subcommittee
 - Energy Conservation Subcommittee
 - Sustainable Student Experience Subcommittee
- Write to your local, state and federal elected officials about environmental and/or sustainability topics that are important to you.
- Volunteer at a local environmental organization.

Thank you for your interest in and your efforts toward living sustainably!

Office of Sustainability

Ursinus College

