

Condos and apartment complexes are some of the most sustainable places to live. These units require less energy to heat and cool than single-family homes because they share walls, floors, and ceilings. Condos and apartments also tend to be located in densely populated urban neighborhoods, encouraging residents to walk and take public transportation.

Go above and beyond by making your condo association or apartment building a leader in sustainability. Conduct a survey of your building to see what environmentally-friendly initiatives are already in place, and brainstorm how you could make your building more sustainable. Implement your ideas and track environmental benefits.

Timeline:

Project Proposal due online: 2 weeks after the Community Organizing class

Part I: Preparation: ~2-3 weeks

Part II: Survey and Implementation: 1-2 months

Part III: Follow Up and Tracking Environmental Benefits: 1 hour

Final Project due online: 2 weeks after your project is complete

Materials:

- Low-flow faucet aerators
- Low-flow showerheads
- Spray bottles for green cleaning solutions
- Vinegar
- Dish detergent
- Green cleaning solution labels
- Compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs)
- Reusable canvas bags
- Copies of the **Green Condo/Apartment Checklist**
- **Guide to Recycling Household Hazardous Waste**
- Copies of **'What's in the Trash' Waste Audit**
- Copies of **'Do It in the Dark' Energy Audit**
- Copies of **'Save the Source' Water Audit**
- Other informational brochures, guides, and maps
- **\$800 Savings Challenge** cards

Part I: Preparation

~2-3 weeks

1. **Become an expert.** Read through the following guide, including the **Green Condo/Apartment Checklist** attached. Ask your liaison if you have any questions about how the project will work.
2. **Define your project vision and goals.** What do you hope to achieve by doing this project? How many of your neighbors do you hope to include? How much energy and/or water do you hope to save?
3. **Recruit other residents in your building to form a project team.** Refer to the **Building Your Project Team** worksheet in your **Project Development Workbook**. Your project team will help you conduct a survey of your building and work with residents and your building management or condo association to implement changes.

Part II: Survey and Implementation

1-2 months

1. **Survey your building using the Green Condo/Apartment Checklist** attached. With the help of your project team, check off the items on the checklist that are already being implemented in your building. Keep in mind the following:
 - Some of the items on the checklist can be implemented throughout the building; others are more appropriate for individuals to implement in their own units. For these items, talk to your neighbors to get an idea of how many people already incorporate green habits into their daily lives.
 - In order to complete the survey, you will need to walk around the building. You also may need to talk to other residents, the building management company or condo association, and the janitorial staff.
 - As you go down the list, think about things your building already does or could be doing that the checklist does not include.



- Based on your survey, choose at least 3 initiatives from the Green Condo/Apartment Checklist** or come up with your own ways to green your condo/apartment. Work with your Green Team to choose at least one initiative from each of the following categories:
 - **Land** (e.g., improve recycling, start an indoor or outdoor composting program)
 - **Air and Energy** (e.g., set up carpools, weatherize, work with janitorial staff to switch to green cleaning products)
 - **Water** (e.g., attach low-flow aerators to sink faucets; fix leaky toilets or sinks)

Involve your condo association or building management whenever appropriate.

Leadership in a Box

One way to green your building is to create a box of conservation supplies to hand out to your neighbors. Your box could include C3's waste, energy, and water home audits, compact fluorescent lightbulbs, recipes for green cleaning solutions, CTA or Chicago Bike maps, information on local farmers' markets, faucet aerators, toilet leak detection cards, canvas grocery bags, and/or other useful items. Organize a condo/apartment meeting to distribute the boxes and teach your neighbors how to use them most effectively. Follow up to make sure the supplies are used and to estimate how many resources you save.

- Order materials through your C3 Liaison.** Refer to your Material Checklist in your Project Proposal.
 - Confirm with your C3 liaison final quantities of each material requested and the address where materials should be shipped. Note: Some materials will need to be picked up at the Chicago Center for Green Technology, 445 N. Sacramento Blvd.
 - Remember, materials can take up to 3 weeks to arrive after C3 orders them so **plan ahead!**
- Roll out your green initiatives.** Depending on your initiatives, you could implement them all at once or put them in place one at a time. Make sure to let your neighbors know what you're doing and how they can help.

Part III: Follow-up and Tracking Environmental Benefits

1 hour

- Calculate the environmental and community benefits of your project.** Once you have implemented all of your ideas, estimate the benefits of your project. For example, you might calculate:
 - How much energy you saved.
 - How much water you saved.
 - How much waste you diverted from landfills.
 - How many people participated in your project.
 - How much publicity you received (e.g., number of notices in community or building newsletter).
- Compare your results to your project's vision and goals (see Part I, Step 2 above).** Did you achieve the results that you hoped for?
- Follow up by continuing your project team's efforts (optional).** For example, when a new resident moves into the building, welcome them with a "Leadership in a Box" kit.

Turn in Final Report Worksheet

Within 2 weeks of project completion

As soon as you've calculated the environmental benefits, please fill out your **Final Report** online. Corresponding materials such as digital photographs, outreach flyers or posters, press releases, or news clippings should be emailed to conservation@cityofchicago.org. Please also enter the information from your **\$800 Savings Challenge** cards on www.chicagoclimatereaction.org.

Green Condo/Apartment Checklist

Modification of the "Green Office Checklist," compiled by Sundee Wislow

Focus on the items on this list that work best for your building. Depending on your situation, some of these items will be best addressed by your condo association or building management; others will involve individual residents.

Reducing, Reusing and Recycling

- If you live in a building that has four units or less, educate your neighbors about how to recycle using the city's blue cart program or recycling drop off centers. (The City of Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation picks up waste from buildings that have four units or less and will provide blue carts to all of these residences by 2011. Recycling drop off centers are available to those that do not yet have blue carts. See www.bluecartschicago.org for more information.)
- If you live in a building that is five or more units, work with building management or your condo association to make sure you are served by an effective recycling program. (Buildings of five or more units are serviced by private waste haulers, which are mandated to recycle applicable materials. Your building management is also required to offer you an effective recycling program, which is defined by three things: source reduction and separation, an education program, and a written recycling plan. See www.bluecartschicago.org for more information.)
Here are some ways you can make sure your building is effectively recycling:
 - Ask to see your building's recycling plan.
 - Check to make sure the details in the plan are being carried out (Are recycling bins accessible to all residents? Are recyclables being separated?)
 - Check to see if the private hauler keeps the recyclables separate from trash as they leave your building or if they have a blue bag program in effect.
 - Ask to see the hauler's semi-annual reports to judge how successful your apartment's recycling efforts are.
- Create an area where people can leave materials to be recycled. This can include cell phones, compact discs, bicycles, computers, and anything that is NOT hazardous material. Ask a volunteer to be in charge of disposal. See the **Guide to Recycling Household Hazardous Waste** for information on how to dispose of these items properly. Any materials on the '**List of Common HHW Products and Safety Tips**' should not be collected as part of your project as they could cause harm to you or your participants.
- Compost food waste outdoors or indoors. www.chicagorecycling.org
- Ask residents to cancel junk mail and mailings. <http://reducewaste.org/> (click on "Residential" on left-hand side; scroll down to "Junk Mail Kit")

Transportation

- Create a "carpool board" where people can post notices of opportunities to share rides to work, the grocery store, the airport, etc.
- Provide CTA or Metra information and maps, available at <http://rtachicago.com/>.
- Provide Chicago Bike Maps, available at www.cityofchicago.org/Transportation/bikemap/keymap.html.

Energy Efficiency

- Post an energy saving tip every week above the mailboxes, on a bulletin board, or in an entry area.
- Distribute free compact fluorescent lightbulbs from the City of Chicago.
- Install an automated thermostat (it's easy to do!) and/or set temperatures so that it will be comfortable during the day, and will use less energy during nights and weekends.
- Schedule an energy audit through your local power company.
- Turn on *power-save* modes on equipment and appliances.
- Turn off equipment during nights and weekends. Attach TV's, radios, computers, microwaves, telephones etc. to power strips for ease in turning them off at night. (Even when not in use, appliances use electricity.)
- For windows that receive direct sunlight, close the blinds to prevent excess heating in the summertime.
- Use a ceiling fan or other fan in the summer time with or without air conditioning. Fans use 98% less energy than A.C. and make you feel up to 6 degrees cooler.
- Open the windows and turn off the air conditioning on nice days.
- Ensure radiators and heaters are not blocked by furniture.

- Turn off lights when exiting rooms.
- If you have to use batteries, buy rechargeable batteries and a charger.
- If purchasing new equipment or appliances, look for EPA Energy Star certified options.

Water Efficiency

- Attach low-flow aerators to sink faucets.
- Install a low-flow showerhead in every bathroom.
- Fix leaky toilets and faucets promptly.
- Check for water leaks at least twice a year.
- Purchase water efficient toilets and dishwashers.
- Research what could be done with gray water and put ideas into practice.

Improved Air Quality

- Conduct an air quality check.
- Buy indoor plants and use natural fertilizers.
- Change air filters regularly.
- Use low VOC paints for walls.
- Turn off air conditioning and open the windows on nice days.
- Establish an effective smoking policy to protect indoor air quality.
- Notify your building manager immediately if you suspect indoor air quality problems.
- Work with building management to ensure only necessary and appropriate pest control practices and non-chemical methods where possible.

Supplies, Products and Furniture

- Use non-toxic, biodegradable cleaning supplies (e.g., Seventh Generation).
<http://www.care2.com/greenliving/make-your-own-non-toxic-cleaning-kit.html>
- Fix or donate broken furniture rather than sending it to a landfill.
- If replacing your carpet, look for non-toxic recyclable carpeting. <http://www.epa.gov/oppt/epp/>
- Purchase products from local suppliers (to avoid long distance shipping and packaging) and from suppliers committed to environmental issues.
- Purchase used items from thrift stores when possible.

Reducing Bird Collisions

(Information provided by the Chicago Ornithological Society, Birds and Buildings Forum, and the National Audubon Society.)

About 8 million birds migrate through Chicago each spring and autumn. Unfortunately, window collisions kill approximately 1 billion birds every year in the US, with millions of collisions happening annually in Chicago. Birds do not see glass, and are attracted by reflections. Especially during migratory season from mid-March to early June and late August to mid-November, building owners and residents can take the following steps to prevent these collisions:

During the day

- Pull down blinds, use external screens, or apply window film to mute reflection.
- Place furniture, banners, or artwork in front of windows to serve as a visual barrier.
- Move green plants away from windows so birds cannot see them as a potential landing spot.

At night, in high-rises

- Turn off lights or close blinds from dusk to daylight.
- Dim or turn off exterior decorative lights, or install motion sensitive lighting.

Green Purchasing:

www.environmentalchoice.com,

<http://www.epa.gov/oppt/epp/>

Guide to Recycling Household Hazardous Waste (HHW)

Chicago Department of Environment

List of Common HHW Products and Safety Tips

Cleaning Products

- Oven cleaners
- Drain cleaners
- Wood and metal cleaners and polishes
- Toilet cleaners
- Tub, tile, shower cleaners
- Bleach (laundry)
- Pool chemicals

Lawn and Garden Products

- Herbicides
- Insecticides
- Fungicides/wood preservatives

Indoor Pesticides

- Ant sprays and baits
- Cockroach sprays and baits
- Flea repellents and shampoos
- Bug sprays
- Houseplant insecticides
- Moth repellents
- Mouse and rat poisons and baits

Automotive Products

- Motor oil
- Fuel additives
- Carburetor and fuel injection cleaners
- Air conditioning refrigerants
- Starter fluids
- Automotive batteries
- Transmission and brake fluid
- Antifreeze

Miscellaneous

- Batteries
- Mercury thermostats or thermometers
- Fluorescent light bulbs
- Driveway sealer

Workshop/Painting Supplies

- Adhesives and glues
- Furniture strippers
- Oil or enamel based paint
- Stains and finishes
- Paint thinners and turpentine
- Paint strippers and removers
- Photographic chemicals
- Fixatives and other solvents

Tip #1 Use and store products containing hazardous substances carefully to prevent any accidents at home. Never store hazardous products in food containers. Do not mix products from the different groups shown above. Keep products containing hazardous materials in their original containers and never remove the labels. Corroding containers, however, should be repackaged and clearly labeled. This will prevent accidental ingestion and also can help protect sanitation workers.

Tip #2 When leftovers remain, never mix household hazardous waste with other products. Incompatibilities may react, ignite, or explode; contaminated household hazardous waste may become unrecyclable.

Personal Protective Clothing and Other Items for Safely Handling HHW

- Safety glasses
- Gloves – rubber, leather – wear rubber gloves under leather gloves. Many of the containers are sharp and therefore the leather gloves will provide protection. The rubber gloves will prevent chemicals from contacting skin.
- Long-sleeve shirt and long pants
- Soap & water – for cleaning after collecting, or for washing off chemicals
- Fire extinguisher

Where to Recycle Household Hazardous Waste

City of Chicago Household Chemical and Computer Recycling Center

The Household Chemical and Computer Recycling Center is the city's first permanent hazardous waste recycling facility. In addition to responsibly disposing of hazardous products from landfills, the center will train ex-offenders in electronics recycling. Many of the electronics will be taken apart and recycled, while newer computers will be refurbished through the program and made available to local schools, churches, non-profit groups and low-income families.

The facility accepts the following materials for recycling or safe disposal: antifreeze, used motor oil, old gasoline, oil-based paints, paint thinners, aerosol paints, herbicides, insecticides, pesticides, lawn chemicals, solvents, drain cleaners, cleaning products, pool chemicals, hobby chemicals, mercury, fluorescent lamps and bulbs, computers and cell phones. People can also use the Paint Exchange Room to swap old paints with one another for free.

These materials are accepted during the facility's hours of operation: Tuesdays from 7 a.m. to noon; Thursdays from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m., and the first Saturday of every month from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Drop off household chemicals and electronics at:

Household Chemical and Computer Recycling Center, 1150 N. North Branch St. on Goose Island

Recycle Batteries

Participate in the City's household battery recycling program at all Chicago Public Libraries and Walgreens stores. By recycling your batteries you will help keep these materials out of the waste stream and the battery components will be reclaimed for reuse. All common dry cell batteries can be recycled, including alkaline, rechargeable, and other common types. Wet cell batteries, like car batteries, cannot be recycled through this program. Funding for the City of Chicago's battery recycling program has been provided in part through a grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Drop off batteries at **Chicago Public Libraries** and **Walgreens Stores**

This recycling program includes most disposal and rechargeable batteries used in the home, including:

- Alkaline Batteries, these are the typical disposable batteries, Duracell, Energizer, Ever Ready
- Lithium Batteries, these are typically found in cameras
- All Button Type Batteries, often found in watches and smaller electronic devices

Recycle Corks

Yemm & Hart Ltd. recycles cork stoppers. The company reprocesses the corks into a block that is sliced into thin sheets that will be offered for sale, made into tack boards, award plaques, coasters, and more. If the company gets enough corks, they may begin to produce recycled cork floor tiles. Collect and mail your cork stoppers *prepaid* (paid by sender) to Yemm & Hart via UPS or USPS: **Wine Cork Recycling, Yemm & Hart Ltd**, 425 North Chamber Drive, Fredericktown, MO, 63645. Or visit <http://www.yemmhart.com/news+/winecorkrecycling.htm> for more information.

Recycle Cell Phones

There are more than 150 million cellular users in the United States alone. About 40 million phones turnover or "churn" annually. If you add in the rapidly growing number of out of use phones, it is estimated that by 2005 there will be over 700 million retired phones in the U.S. Seventy-five percent of these out-of-use phones will be in people's drawers at home or at work. The balance is going to landfills or is recycled. The EPA estimates that this quantity of cell phones is equal to about 250,000 tons of toxic materials.

ECO-CELL is an organization that takes used cell phones, accessories and cell phone batteries and recycles them using the best demonstrated technologies for recycling e-waste. Approximately 80% of the phones collected will be refurbished and reused by first-time users abroad or by selected local organizations, such as Hospital patients for emergency 911 calls. All unusable cell phones and accessories will be recycled under strict EPA guidelines by certified recyclers.

ECO-CELL pays non-profits to collect cell phones as a fundraiser. We recommend recycling your phones through Protecting Animals, USA – a nonprofit, 501(c)3 animal-advocacy organization based in Chicago, IL that advocates for the welfare of non-human animals through outreach, education, and active campaigning. This organization will receive dollars from ECO-CELL for the phones to aid in their fundraising as an added benefit. To learn more about ECO-CELL, visit <http://www.eco-cell.org/>. Collect used cell phones, and mail to or drop off at: **Protecting Animals, USA**, 6143 N Lakewood #3, Chicago, IL 60660. You can also drop off cell phones at the city's new **Household Chemical and Computer Recycling Center** at 1150 N. North Branch Street on Goose Island.

Recycle CD-ROMS

Plastics Recycling Inc, located in Indianapolis, grinds the CDs down and reuses the plastic for automotive parts and the spindles for adding machine rolls. The firm is capable of handling large quantities, so please share the information with colleagues, friends and family. CDs must be sent without sleeves or cases. Send CDs to: **Plastics Recycling Inc. (Allen Shaw)**, 2015 S. Pennsylvania, Indianapolis, IN 46625, 317-780-6100

Recycle Floppy Disks & Videocassettes

Alternative Community Training (ACT) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide personalized support to individuals with disabilities as they become full and valued members of the community. The company employs over forty disabled employees who erase and then package floppy disks and videocassettes every day. By donating these items, you not only dispose of unwanted materials, but also support the training and development of these individuals. For more information see <http://www.actrecycling.org/donations/> Mail to floppy disks and videocassettes to: **Alternative Community Training**, 2200 Burlington, Columbia, Missouri 65202

Recycle Tyvek® Envelopes

Turn any Tyvek® envelope inside out, so the unprinted white surface shows on the outside. Stuff the inside-out Tyvek® envelope with other used Tyvek® envelopes for recycling. For small quantities (less than 25 envelopes/month), address and mail the envelope to: **Tyvek Recycle. Attn: Shirley B. Wright, Tyvek® Recycling Specialist**, 2400 Elliham Avenue #A, Richmond, VA 23237. See http://www2.dupont.com/Tyvek_Envelopes/en_US/tech_info/tech_environ.html to find out how to recycle larger quantities.



This information is brought to you by Clean Air Counts. We are a Chicago regional initiative of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, the U.S. EPA, the City of Chicago, and the Illinois EPA. We seek to improve air quality in the Chicago area by helping households and businesses to reduce their emissions of smog-forming pollutants. By using the non-toxic cleaning products described in this article, you can help reduce smog! For more information on Clean Air Counts, please see www.cleanaircounts.org.

Healthy Cleaning for your Home

Many common cleaning products contain hazardous chemicals and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which pollute the air. Using air-friendly cleaning products helps protect the health of your family by reducing or eliminating their exposure to the chemicals released by most cleaning products. Air-friendly cleaning products tend to be multi-purpose, so a single air-friendly cleaning product can replace several specialized traditional products.

I. The best solution is to make your own cleaning products from natural materials. Not only is this a healthier, safer solution but it can save you money.

Basic All-Purpose Cleaner Formula

½ teaspoon baking soda (for example; Arm & Hammer)
or 2 teaspoons borax (for example; 20 Mule Team Borax)
½ teaspoon liquid soap or detergent
2 cups hot water
spray bottle

Combine everything in a spray bottle. Shake to blend. You can make a soft scrub paste by substituting water for more soap.

Window Cleaner

½ teaspoon liquid soap or detergent
¼ cup vinegar
2 cups of water

Combine everything in a spray bottle. Shake to blend.

Toilet Bowl Cleaners

Spray straight white distilled vinegar on the toilet bowl rim.

OR

Pour 1 cup of borax into the toilet bowl at night before you go to sleep. The next morning clean out the toilet bowl with a brush.

Furniture Polish

Any vegetable oil, lemon oil, etc. (2 parts oil, 1 part lemon juice works great!)

Room Freshener

Baking Soda - set around in small bowls to absorb odors; also cleans sinks, great for laundry, etc.

Reducing the Smell of Vinegar By Chicago Conservation Corps

Non-toxic cleaning products are healthy and environmentally friendly, but tend to smell strongly of vinegar. Here are some ideas for reducing the smell. Trial and error will help you determine which options are right for you.

- Use apple cider vinegar instead of white vinegar (the two types work equally well, but apple cider vinegar has a milder scent).
- Add lemon juice or tea tree oil, which smells like mint.
- Recipes that include baking soda tend to smell less strongly.

Get Rid of Pests/Weeds

Flea Killer (Borax)

Sprinkle borax on dog beds, carpets, and other areas where you suspect that fleas are hatching. (Note that very high doses would need to be ingested to harm a pet or human).

Mold Inhibitor (Borax and water)

Make a thick borax and water paste. Smear it on the moldy area. Let set until dry (Overnight or longer). Sweep up the powder, and rinse off the rest.

Mice Deterrent (Borax)

Sprinkle borax on the floor along the walls (mice like to run along the side of walls).

Poison Ivy Killer (Vinegar)

Spray straight white distilled vinegar on poison ivy.

II. If you don't want to make your own cleaning products, you can try these brands that have little or no VOCs:

- Soft Scrub (not with bleach)
- Seventh Generation
- Murphy's Oil Soap
- Earth Friendly Products (makers of Orange Plus, Window Kleener, etc.)
- Plunger or drain snake
- Method (at Target stores)
- Bon Ami
- Bio Kleen

III. When shopping for cleaners, read the labels and try to avoid:

VOC-Based Solvents - Benzene, Toluene, Xylene, Trichloroethane, Petroleum Distillates & Surfactants, such as Nonylphenol Ethoxylate, Phenolic Compounds, Glycol Ethers (Ethylene Glycol & Butoxy Ethanol), and Isopropyl Alcohol, though not as toxic.

CHLORINE BLEACH OR SODIUM HYPOCHLORITE- Preferable substitute: Sodium Percarbonate

PHOSPHATES- No more than 0.5%

EDTA & NTA- Acids used to soften water & increase cleaning power