

Introduction

Welcome to Week 2 of the 2018 Certified Green Office Program! Last week, the first newsletter covered the four Required Actions for Green Office certification. If you missed it or need a refresher, you can find the newsletter's contents [here](#). This week, we will begin covering the 32 Elective Actions, starting with Actions #1 & #2:

1. Put up signage near light switches prompting people to turn off the lights.
2. Use separate power strips or another tool to make it easy to switch off monitors without cutting off the CPU.

As a reminder, completion of five Elective Actions beyond the Required Actions will earn you Bronze level certification, completion of ten will earn Silver level certification, and fifteen Elective Actions will earn Gold level certification. Each forthcoming newsletter will review 1-2 Elective Actions.

Instructions

Elective Action #1: Put up signage near light switches prompting people to turn off the lights.

For many of us, it is a no-brainer to turn off lights in unoccupied rooms when we are in our own homes -- why pay for electricity that we are not actively using? However, this practice hasn't really made the jump to public spaces like our offices. Maybe we feel uncomfortable turning off light switches in buildings we don't own, or maybe it just genuinely doesn't occur to us to do so when we aren't responsible for the power bill. Whatever the reasoning, it doesn't make any more sense to leave on lights in empty rooms at our offices (whether it's for the night or just over lunch break) than it does to leave the lights on in our homes. One easy way to encourage your office to switch off the lights is to put up reminder signs to do so.

You can download iSEE's "Turn off the juice" signage [here](#), or see the attached "Not in use? Turn off the juice!" document for some more creative designs. There are also tons of great printouts that are just an Internet search away -- or, try your hand at designing your own! Remember, all signs you put up should follow all required University guidelines about posting information.

You may be surprised at how big an impact these signs can make. Even little things can go a long way towards changing our behaviors to become more sustainable!

Elective Actions #2: Use separate power strips or another tool to make it easy to switch off monitors without cutting off the CPU.

For most electronic devices, the only way to completely stop their electricity consumption when not in use is to unplug them from the wall. This is because many electronics either don't turn off completely when the off button is pressed (going into ["standby" mode](#) instead) or just because they continue to draw small amounts of energy anyway. Power strips are perhaps the most effective tool to combat this drain of "phantom" energy. By flipping of the switch on a power strip, power is cut off to every device that is plugged into it. So, by having computers in your office plugged into power strips, you can ensure that as much power as possible is cut off overnight. You just have to remember to turn off the strips! Most also have surge protectors built in, so there is the added benefit of protection for your computers against power surges.

Thankfully, power strips are a fairly cheap investment -- basic ones can be found for \$10 or less. If you want to invest in a "smart" power strip (which might be able to turn itself off when it senses when power is no longer being used, selectively cut off power to different devices, or be turned off remotely, among other capabilities), costs could run upwards of \$30.

While power strips can be found in a variety of local stores ranging from hardware to electronics to big box (and we would encourage you to purchase them local to reduce the transportation footprint of shipping packages), there are also a wide variety of power strips available on the Internet. [By perusing the options](#) available on Amazon, you can get a sense of the many different types that are available and what kind might work best in your office. [Click here](#) to specifically check out options for smart power strips.